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JAN 25 1940

THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XIX. No. 464 (New Series) SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 1940 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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MR. HORE-BELISHA'S DISMISSAL

THE terrific rumpus over the Hore-Belisha affair is partly to be explained by the general discontent with the Government of Mr. Chamberlain. Its efficiency is dubious; its reactionary tendencies obvious. Here is an incident round which many fears and discontents have crystallised. The Government certainly needed reconstruction; but Mr. Chamberlain began not by changing one of the notoriously inadequate Ministers but by discarding the unusually energetic man, who built up the new army on more democratic lines and showed much courage in appointing generals on grounds of efficiency rather than seniority. His place is taken by an aristocratic Minister, who is personally agreeable, but who was not successful in any of a number of former governmental posts. That there has for some time been friction at the War Office is news to the public; Mr. Hore-Belisha's dismissal comes as a shock, and the only explanation so far given is that there was "prejudice" against him. Mr. Chamberlain will doubtless say that in war the business of the Prime Minister is to see that things work smoothly and that any colleague who arouses prejudices which do not make for efficiency must be sacrificed. This is Mr. Chamberlain's strongest card. But when a Minister resigns, the House of Commons is entitled to a proper explanation. It will certainly demand such an explanation when it meets next Tuesday.

Prejudice may come from a variety of quarters and cover criticism of very different types. We are aware that Mr. Hore-Belisha has been criticised on administrative grounds and that there are important civil servants who will be glad to see him go. But Mr. Chamberlain does not appear to have accused him of inefficiency, nor, if that had been the charge, would he have offered him the Board of Trade with the natural implication of the later reversion to a more important office. Prejudice clearly comes from other quarters. In part it is social and personal. Military hierarchies are often inclined to anti-semitism, and there are important personages at G.H.Q. who have no doubt found Mr. Hore-Belisha's personality distasteful. He is too "clever" by half, pushing, fond of publicity and apt to ask questions which seem to the military mind tantamount to "interference" in staff matters. If his criticisms were to the point, the objection of the military mind would be all the greater. Questions of race, snobbery and personality must all be taken into account in appreciation of this affair, and it must be remembered that Mr. Hore-Belisha gave offence to very highly placed people when he removed ten senior officers from the Army some months ago. This change was generally approved, and it is to Mr. Hore-Belisha that Lord Gort and other senior officers owe their positions at the present time. But Mr. Hore-Belisha did not carry

his purge far enough. There are still those in positions of authority who resented it and who were glad of an opportunity to show their dislike.

The nature of Tuesday's debate cannot be anticipated; it depends very much on Mr. Hore-Belisha's statement and on the facts which Mr. Chamberlain is induced to divulge. The debate is unlikely to concentrate on the delicate and complex personal issues. Mr. Hore-Belisha is more popular in the country than in the House, where his answers to questions have not recently commanded all the confidence that is desirable. But big issues are involved on which the House feels strongly—the manner and mystery of the dismissal, the familiar question of the relation between civil control and brass hats and the problem of the general reconstruction of the Government.

Ciano and Csaky

The journeyings of Count Csaky and his parleys with Count Ciano have, apparently, resulted in a firm offer of Italian assistance to Hungary in the case of a Russian attack. In these negotiations the attitude of Hungary has been relatively simple. Now that she has Russia instead of Poland as her Carpathian neighbour, and on the other side a Germany in need of Rumanian oil, Hungary is looking round for assistance. Naturally she has turned to Italy, and under Italian pressure has improved relations with Jugoslavia by renouncing her claims to the Banat. Meanwhile Count Ciano, realising that any idea of a Balkan bloc is premature, is trying to induce the Balkan countries to sign bilateral agreements. His main aim is to prevent their being drawn into the war and at the same time to encourage them to rely on Italy as their defender against Bolshevism. He is finding it difficult to settle the differences between Hungary and Rumania over Transylvania; and even if he achieves this, it will need considerable skill to increase Italian influence in the Balkans and play the role of crusader against Bolshevism, without breaking the Axis altogether. If Germany threatened war, it is unlikely as things stand at present that Italy would make much of a stand in defence of her Balkan friends. Indeed, it is not impossible that Mussolini would once again reverse his policy and take his share of any spoils that were going.

The Germanisation of Czechoslovakia

It is ironic to recall that the Führer solemnly promised the Protectorate full cultural liberty, when we read the reports of Nazi treatment of Czech education and cultural life. Everything has been eliminated from school text books which recalls the Republic: the names of Masaryk and Benes may not, for instance, be mentioned; and the whole Hussite period is dealt with in one paragraph in a recently approved book. 12,000 teachers have now been removed from their posts on the ground of subversive activities, hundreds of elementary schools and many high schools and training colleges have been closed, while German schools are being opened in purely Czech districts. There is of course no higher education at all since the decree which closed the Czech Universities and Technical High Schools for three years; but a fortnight ago the German University of Prague was reopened and christened the Charles University, the traditional name of the Czech University. Since all clinics, laboratories and libraries connected with the Universities are also closed, no "home research" is possible, and the Czech students must either enter the German Universities or give up any hope of university training. The intention is obvious: the Czech intelligentsia is to be liquidated; and in future a Czech must be either a traitor to his people or a servant of the Aryan race.

Mr. Bevin on the Government

Mr. Ernest Bevin made a prompt and trenchant reply to Mr. Chamberlain's references to wages and savings in his Mansion House speech. The Government, Mr. Bevin argued, ought, instead of allowing prices to rise, to have kept them stable and met any unavoidable rise in costs by means of subsidies paid for by taxation. This would have been much fairer, because every rise in prices leads to a series of "rakes-off" by each interest that handles the commodity on its way to the consumer. The Treasury regards this with equanimity because it taxes these "rakes-off," with the consequence that the capitalists and the Government become partners in profiteering. It is unreasonable to impose sacrifices on the lower-paid workers, who have no margin; and such a policy can only result, if the war lasts long, in serious labour troubles. "The Prime Minister's policy," said Mr. Bevin, "is a bankers' and rentiers' policy." The policy of stabilised prices having been rejected, the Unions are not in a mood to contribute towards increasing the "rakes-off" of the various capitalist interests whose representatives applauded the Mansion House speech.

Controllers, New and Old

This attitude on the part of the Trade Unions is likely to be reinforced by the news that Sir Andrew Duncan is being succeeded as Controller of Iron and Steel by the Chairman of Guest, Keen and Baldwin's. We know nothing of Sir Charles Wright personally, except that he was President of the British Iron and Steel Federation in 1937–38, and is one of the most prominent leaders of the industry which he is now to control. This policy, of setting the big capitalists to control themselves in the interests of the public, is now apparently well established; but the public will take a lot of convincing that it is really all for the best. Sir Andrew Duncan's case was somewhat different; for, though he was at the head of the Iron and Steel Federation before his appointment as Controller, he is not so much identified with a particular sectional interest. He is one of the men of push and go who are set to reorganise one industry after another when it has got into a mess. Graduating in the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation, Sir Andrew became Coal Controller in the last war. When the "Grid" was established, he was put at the head of the Central Electricity Board, whence he migrated to the steel industry on its reorganisation a few years ago. He will not lack energy in his new post as President of the Board of Trade, where he will now be able to consult the official files relating to his success in looking after the big steel firms' interests since they entered the European cartel and acquired a virtual monopoly behind the tariff imposed on their behalf.

This Year's Harvest

If the assurances of the Minister of Agriculture are to be believed, there is little to disturb the minds of the

farming community about the problem of the 1940 harvest, but many astute farmers are already much perturbed by the possibility of an acute shortage of seed corn for spring planting. The very high price to which oats and barley had already risen before Christmas and the ever increasing quantity in which both were being used for stock feeding and for brewing owing to the sudden reduction of imported substitutes has caused some concern about the supply of seed. As for corn a great amount of the grassland ploughed this autumn was ploughed too late for winter sowing and the demand for spring seed corn will certainly be in every way abnormal. The enlarged harvest, due to the increase of the arable acreage, will also call for a considerable increase in binders, in carts and lorries, and in farm labour capable of the arduous work in the harvest fields. The County War Agricultural Committees are already concerning themselves with the binder problem, and, we trust, with the problem of farm haulage, but the labour problem has scarcely been touched. The Women's Land Army is unlikely to be of great assistance, as much of the work will be too heavy for girls. The "peak labour load" is such that it can, in any case, scarcely be met by those who stand in need of regular employment. The problem could, with careful forethought, be largely met by organising a "Harvest Army" of schoolboy and student labour whose vacations coincide with harvest time. But we expect the Minister will assure us shortly that all is well, and another problem will have to be met at the eleventh hour.

Economic Developments in Germany

Once again those optimistic prophets, who foretold that General Göring would soon be out of favour, were disappointed, when, after a long and bitter struggle between the radical supporters of National Bolshevism and the conservatives, the General appeared as a plump *deus ex machina* to resolve the discord. His new appointment will probably satisfy the radicals—since he is known to be a man who gets things done—while placating the Conservatives, who will feel that, if they have lost yet another battle, the new controller of German economy was once a gentleman. Recent developments are intelligible in the light of economic developments since Munich. When Hitler decided to increase still further the tempo of war-preparation and spend still vaster sums on fortifications and the accumulation of stocks, he had no reserve of unemployed labour or plant at his disposal. Thus he could only proceed by means of increased taxation, confiscation and help from abroad. All these methods were adopted. Tax revenue increased from roughly 14 milliard marks in 1937–38 to almost 18 milliards in 1938–39 and may reach 24 milliards this year, an increase of 33⅓ per cent. compared to 10 per cent. in this country. Confiscation was used against the Jews and some plunder was secured in Czechoslovakia. On the outbreak of war rationing was extended to include all essential commodities and this forced the consumer to save whatever income he had beyond the amount expended on rations. But full mobilisation produced a serious dislocation of industry which was intensified by our blockade. Imports cost more, exports overseas fell off, and, owing to greater transport costs, a reduced profit was derived from them. As against this, the falling off of British exports made it possible to sell at attractive prices large quantities of goods in neighbouring countries; and, unless our policy is changed, Germany will soon be receiving supplies from them in return. Meanwhile, as a precautionary measure against the blockade, the Nazis decided to reduce still further internal consumption. The first drive was against the workers, and it looked as though Germany was returning to a more "liberal" economy. The personnel of the chief economic council was entirely conservative; hours were lengthened, overtime and extra pay cut; and, while the taxation of the poor was tightened up, some loopholes were left for the wealthy. Indeed there was a flat rate in income tax and a maximum limit of 65 per cent. The result of these measures was a serious decrease in production; and a conflict in the party which resulted in the abolition of most of these measures last December. Rations were again increased and overtime pay restored, and finally General Göring was given a free hand. This decision was reached not for humanitarian reasons but because it had been demonstrated that it was impossible "to soak the poor" any more, without producing that most dangerous of wartime symptoms—longer hours and declining production. In the war "between German Socialism and British Capitalism" it is essential to retain the support of the workers and for this reason the drift towards "National Bolshevism" is inevitable. This may well lead in the near future to a veto on withdrawals from savings banks and a renewed attempt to soak the rich. But such measures, unless they are accompanied by spectacular defeats, will not weaken the Nazi hold.

Lectures in London

It is interesting to watch the disappearance of "the intellectual black-out" in London. Among the latest contributions to the new "starlight" is a programme of free public lectures which the London School of Economics is offering at its evening school premises, Canterbury Hall. Mr. Robert Boothby, Professor Gilbert Murray, Major Attlee and Lord Cecil are lecturing on "Approaches to Peace"; Professor Tawney, Professor Lauterpacht, Professor Robbins, Dr. W. I. Jennings and Professor Laski are speaking on "Problems of Federation"; Mr. Lees-Smith is giving a weekly "Survey of the War"; and among other lectures are those by two eminent German refugee scholars, Dr. R. R. Kuczynski, the population expert, on "Lebensraum," and Dr. Hermann Mannheim, the criminologist, on "War and Crime." Birkbeck College is following up the series of successful lunch-time lectures inaugurated in the Autumn Term with a new series for the first part of the Spring Term by Mr. Kingsley Martin on "The Technique of Propaganda" (Mondays, January 15th, 22nd and 29th, and February 5th), by the Right Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P., on "The Strategy of the War" (Tuesdays, January 16th and 23rd), and by Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, Master of Downing College, Cambridge, on "The War at Sea" (Tuesdays, January 30th and February 6th).

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A CHALLENGE TO MR. CHAMBERLAIN

SPEAKING in the Mansion House, the centre of the City of London, Mr. Chamberlain clearly felt that he was among friends; and his address, remarkable both for its vigour and, in certain respects, for its candour, was to the taste of the distinguished audience. Following closely the lines of Mr. Brand's recent article in the *Times*, it sketched the Government's plan for paying for the war and indicated in broad outline the sacrifices which Mr. Chamberlain would allot to the different sections of the community. The cat is out of the Treasury bag.

The Premier warned the country against "complacency." He foresaw the necessity both of controlling exports and imports and of diverting labour from the production of unnecessary consumers goods into war-industries. He suggested that an extension of rationing might soon be necessary and that each of them should as far as possible reduce his purchases of goods and lend the money thus saved to the Government. Against such advice no word of criticism can be raised by anyone who realises the strength of our opponents. If the war is to be of long duration, the democracies will be compelled to mobilise all their resources and to organise their use in a common plan. Such an idea may seem strange to the City: it is a commonplace of Socialist thought for peace as well as for war.

When, however, we examine Mr. Chamberlain's speech in greater detail, we see that his own complacency is staggering. "We have a plan," he says, and asks the people to make their sacrifices, in the assurance that the Government, in its wisdom, will ensure that all is for the best. Apart from his bare statement, there is little evidence that such a plan exists. After four months of war, unemployment is still higher than in the last month of peace; the emptiness of the Government's assurances to the farmers has been lamentably exposed, and there is still no co-ordination between our currency, trade and blockade policies. If Mr. Chamberlain believes that he has planned our economic effort by the simple device of calling the leading personalities of commerce and industry "controllers," he is an optimist indeed; and his optimism is shared by neither the Opposition nor the Government's own experts. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Brand may have a plan in their heads; if so, it has not been put into operation.

Even more ominous than this complacency was Mr. Chamberlain's simple faith that, since the rich had made their sacrifice and the limit of taxation was already in sight, it was now the turn of the poor. Nearly a century ago Disraeli discovered the existence of two nations inside Britain: but he did not accept it as a fact decreed by the immutable laws of providence. On the contrary, he saw his political mission as the breaking down of this class-barrier. Not so Mr. Chamberlain. He accepts the principle that Britain is divided into two nations, the income tax payers and the rest; and he argues that, since the tax payer has been already nearly soaked to capacity, and the rest consume two-thirds of the goods, the war can only be prosecuted if their consumption is drastically cut.

It is horrifying that in a democracy fighting for its life the Prime Minister should show such a complete ignorance of the conditions of that huge majority of the people who live below the income tax level. Mr. Chamberlain talked as though the working people as a whole had, in contrast to the rich, made no sacrifice up till now. He made no mention of those millions who eke out an existence on the dole, on the Old Age Pension and on Public Assistance, those other millions in unorganised trades who have received no wage increases and those families for whom the war has meant the difference between a good wage and a soldier's allowance. He omitted to mention that in the "vicious spiral" wages had failed to catch up prices and that for that reason organised Labour too has made a sacrifice already. Such facts were for him mere "details," subordinated to the simple premise the rich are paying: now the poor must pay.

It would be interesting to know whether the Premier really means that the 10 per cent. of our families, which Sir John Orr calculates has less than 10*s*. per head or the 20 per cent. with from 10*s*. to 15*s*. per head, should reduce consumption still further; whether those work people, who as a result of the war have now for the first time a chance of a decent livelihood, should continue under-nourished; or, lastly, whether he really expects that, while the cost of living continues to rise and the profits of industry remain at the disposal of the employers, the Trade Unions will agree to stabilise wage rates at the existing level. If he does, Mr. Ernest Bevin has given him his answer. In what he said last Tuesday night he spoke for the whole working-class, the vast majority of the nation.

Mr. Chamberlain went on to argue that "in these times of trial we cannot guarantee that sacrifices are all going to be equal: but if each one makes the sacrifice as the call comes to him, his own conscience will be clear." Such an appeal was very properly directed to his comfortable audience: it was an impertinence to make it to the poor, unless it was accompanied by guarantees.

The first of these guarantees is "the iron ration," that minimum of essential commodities which every citizen requires. This iron ration should be assured at fixed prices—which may well mean an increase rather that a decrease in working-class consumption of these essentials. Before we consider cutting the "luxuries" of the poor we must ensure that malnutrition does not become an enemy more dangerous than the Nazis. Such a minimum standard is a demand not only of humanity but of war-efficiency, and if we intend to defeat the Nazis it must be imposed at whatever cost to the wealthier classes. Almost as important is the full restoration of school and medical services, interrupted by the war, the resumption of factory inspection, especially for juvenile labour—in Manchester there are boys and girls working a 10 hour day—and of the Court of Referees whose work is now being done by the officials of the U.A.B. A nation which regards as a proper wartime saving the neglect of its youth and the disregard of its unemployed is as unfitted to champion the cause of democracy, as a Prime Minister who demands sacrifices of the poor without offering any assurance that those sacrifices will not be extended to those who have already suffered from the ravages of "peace."

The poor are not making sacrifices? The rich are already playing their part? Mr. Chamberlain's complacency is intolerable. Though the burden of taxation is heavy, the war is being largely financed by loans. Those loans are no "sacrifice" for the rich or for the middle classes

but a substitution of one form of investment for another; and every million which is added to the National Debt will become, when the war is over, another obstacle to social improvement. When Mr. Chamberlain asks for a temporary sacrifice of standards therefore, he must face a counter-question: will it not happen that at the end of the war when we ask for a resumption of social services, we shall receive the reply that the crippling loan of national debt compels a rigid economy? The people will have made their sacrifice for democracy only to find that it has been in vain. When accounts are settled it is the holder of Government stock who will have the prior claim.

To this problem there is only one solution. Ever since last March the Labour Party has been urging the merits of a tax on capital. A graduated tax, averaging a yield of 2 per cent., on all capital over £10,000 would go far towards balancing the budget and removing the burden of post-war interest charges. Here is a small sacrifice which the rich could make. In Mr. Chamberlain's words, "the call has come," but it has met with no response.

There is yet another sacrifice which the rich and the middle-classes could make, if the Government were prepared to enforce it. They might agree that for the duration of the war every company should reduce its dividends below the pre-war level and put its profits into reserve. That would be a practical method of compelling a reduction of expenditure on luxury goods, and might, if it was done voluntarily, persuade the working people that the more prosperous among us were really ready for sacrifice. But instead we find that certain Banks have already increased their dividends; and the Railways are arguing that, since they are doing more work—who does the work, by the way?—they are entitled to increased profits. At the Mansion House Mr. Chamberlain had his opportunity of castigating such unpatriotic behaviour. He did not take it. On the contrary, he congratulated the wealthy on their self-sacrifice!

Ministers may come and go, but such personal changes do not alter the character of the National Government, as expressed by the Premier. It is a government of the rich, which (try as it may) can neither understand the needs of the people nor speak their language; a government which is determined to maintain the antiquated and oligarchic structure of our economic and social life, at whatever cost to the mass of the people. When such a Government compliments the prosperous on their self-sacrifice, and demands, without any guarantees, unlimited sacrifices from the poor, there is only one reply. The Labour Party and the Trade Unions must take up the challenge. On them hangs the future of democracy.

ITALY AND HER PRESS

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

"WHAT will Italy do?" This is a question which has never occurred more often than to-day, and it is indeed a difficult one to answer in view of the many considerations which present themselves to any impartial observer.

All our official knowledge favours Italian participation on the side of Germany. There is, first of all, a definite pact of Alliance the validity of which has been recently reaffirmed by the Fascist Grand Council. There is a regime which is, or professes to be, strictly akin to Nazism and, especially in foreign policy, inspired by the same creed: the righteousness of territorial expansion as an end in itself, regardless of the means by which it has to be carried out. And finally we find a press which is openly, consistently—and we may well add bitterly—anti-British, perhaps more anti-British than anti-French.

On the other hand, a more careful consideration leads us to unexpected conclusions. The pact with Germany has been emphatically reaffirmed, but the word *Axis* has disappeared completely from the Italian papers. And besides, if we are to believe Count Ciano's declarations, the pact, in its last edition, meant "No war for the next three years," thus tying Germany's hands for a corresponding period of time. If that were true, the *Axis* would certainly stand as one of the greatest achievements of Anglo-French diplomacy. At any rate this pact, whatever its wording, was never intended for aggressive purposes. That is clear from the attitude adopted by Italy.

We pointed out the similarity between Nazism and Fascism, both totalitarian and both dictatorial. And yet Fascism—unlike Nazism—though professing itself "totalitarian" leaves out of its range two capital forces: the Church and the Monarchy. As to the first, there is no need to deal at length with the interest which the Vatican has in a neutral Italy. Putting aside all ideal and religious considerations, the mere fact of an Italian alliance with Germany in a war against Britain and France would bring tremendous prejudice to the Catholic Church, residing in Italy and with a "general staff" composed chiefly of Italians. Such a war would put the Vatican in a most dangerous position. No wonder, therefore, that the Church is working hard, through her clergy, to foster a peaceful public opinion, especially among the peasants.

As to the Monarchy, the current reports of misunderstandings between the King and the Duce are certainly far from being true. But the Crown has, nevertheless, a policy of its own. The Fascist Party may come to an end, whilst the Crown is supposed to last beyond and above parties. No doubt the King has in former times given his acquiescence to Fascism. Nobody could in fact disbelieve that he welcomed the title of Emperor of Abyssinia, nor could anyone deny that the new Albanian bodyguard was greeted as something most likely to confer a new splendour upon the Royal Court. But, in spite of all this, the Crown has always been very careful not to associate itself too closely with the Party. People who remember the claims put forward by the Duce not many months ago (it was a list headed by Tunis and Djibouti and ending with Nice and Savoy) will have noticed that the last two claims, far from representing two national problems, were only two regions of a purely dynastic interest; in other words a bait, intended to rally the Monarchy to the programme of the Party. The whole manoeuvre failed. To-day—whatever the Party's intentions—the Quirinal has made its choice on the side of peace, and the recent exchange of visits between the King and the Pope is a confirmation of the identity of views between Crown and Church.

As for the press, all the papers, it is true, are completely pro-German. Count Ciano's great speech has been described as an "Indictment of the Democracies." These are reported to have favoured Communism whenever possible, and only a few days ago some papers pretended to discover what was described as "a change of attitude in the British press concerning Russia" (*Popolo D'Italia*). News from Great Britain is treated with abuse, mockery and contempt. And yet, what is the meaning of this attitude? That question will bring us back to a wider field of discussion.

Nobody will deny the importance of Italy's strategic position in the shaping of her foreign policy. The French Yellow Book, which has just been published, gives us to understand that Hitler's ambitions were directed towards the East. If that be true we can scarcely think of a more bitter humiliation for the Democracies than to be left pressing at the gate of the Western Wall, raging with impotence at the sight of the German troops overrunning Rumania, Bulgaria and Turkey. But to-day the door of the Balkans is guarded by Hungary, for Germany cannot possibly reach Rumania except over Hungarian soil. And here is where Italy plays a decisive part.

No doubt, one of Mussolini's more far-sighted moves has been the creation of an Italo-Hungarian friendship which could justify Italian action for the defence of that country. Hungary, to-day more than ever before, holds the key to the Balkans or, to put it bluntly, to the Mediterranean. Here is where Italy is threatened. For, if Germany could succeed in turning the Mediterranean into a minefield, British trade could be diverted to a different—though a much longer—way, but Italy's total sea trade would simply disappear. This is the chief reason why Italy cannot afford a war against Britain and France; both these Powers, in fact, are provided with an alternative route which she is lacking. Thus, what Germany would be ready to do at any time at her Ally's expense, Italy will never dare, for it would mean cutting her own throat. It is therefore largely due to Italy if the war to-day has reached a standstill enabling the Allies to bring economic pressure to bear upon Germany, while her armies are prevented from other aggressive enterprises; and here Italian and Allied (particularly British) interests agree, in spite of the abusive headlines of the Italian papers against this country. There is a deep reality in these arguments: can Mussolini fail to understand them? How then to account for the hostile attitude of his press?

The Duce, we believe, is well aware that the Allies have a keen interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Italian Peninsula. Unrest or revolution would in fact evoke the danger of German intervention, and thus of a German drive towards the Adriatic. He knows also that—while fighting Nazism—Britain and France are bound to support Fascism, and himself as the leader of Fascist Italy. And he takes advantage of his position. It is as though he were saying to his people: "Look how strong we are. We can afford to defy the biggest powers, and nobody dares to raise a finger against us!" Great Britain, on the other hand, is directly interested in the maintenance of a strong government in Italy, she is interested in the Duce maintaining his prestige before the Italian people, she has no reason whatever—paradoxical though it may seem—for weakening his position. Both sides are thus playing the most subtle, and at the same time the most absurd, of all games.

A LONDON DIARY

WHO paid for the foolish advertisement: "We must have Hore-Belisha!" which appeared in the *Evening Standard* and *Daily Express*? It was sent to other newspapers which refused it and the agency which handled it has not so far disclosed its origin. If it was a friend of Mr. Belisha, then indeed he must pray to be saved from such political innocents. It may, of course, have been an irresponsible and wealthy free-lance. If it was an enemy, then we have more Macchiavellis about than one had imagined. Certainly nothing could have been done more likely to strengthen Mr. Chamberlain's hand. Until this advertisement appeared the Conservative press was on the defensive. Now I anticipate a vicious personal counter-attack.

* * *

The affair Hore-Belisha has snowed under the question of the other ministerial appointments. Sir John Reith is a man of towering ability who will take command of a Ministry which has hitherto been chaotic. That he will make a going concern of it, no one doubts. Whether he is successful in a deeper sense depends on his capacity for getting on with other people. At the B.B.C. he did not have to answer questions in the House; he has no parliamentary experience, though M.P.s will remember that on one or two occasions, when wrath was loud against the B.B.C., Sir John met members in private meetings and handled them with notable success. The newspapers have been quick to call attention to his refusal to grant interviews. This is not important, but his capacity to work democratically with the press in the future is likely to be of immense importance. He will find his staff very willing to serve loyally and enthusiastically if they are given a chance and allowed that measure of freedom and security without which good work cannot be obtained from intelligent people. They are tired of being wasted; they are all anxious to do a big job.

* * *

An English official in India has sent me a fascinating letter about the way in which the war is presented to the Indian peoples. We depend in India, he says, largely on the radio. The B.B.C. is "distinguished chiefly by a namby-pamby complacency which seems to avoid any definite statement like the plague; while the *Deutsche Rundfunk* is notable for a vigorous embroidery of facts and a plentiful dose of flattery." Since it is true that "the best actor or journalist captures the mob, whatever may be the uprightness or otherwise of his moral character," he remarks that "it is a pity that a little more imagination cannot be used in presenting the British case, which is, one hopes, not quite so dreary as it is beginning to seem. And if not imagination, at least commonsense." Then follows an illuminating translation of a Hindustani bulletin broadcast to India from Berlin on December 27th.

> Now we would like to draw the attention of our listeners to the speech delivered by H.M. King George VI on Christmas Day.
>
> The King said, "I believe from my heart that the cause which binds together my peoples and our gallant faithful allies is the cause of Christian civilisation. On no other basis can true civilisation be built." We would request our listeners to please understand the words "Christian Civilisation." That this is the supermost civilisation in the world, is stressed by His Majesty.
>
> Mohammadans who are ready to fight for Britain would in other words be fighting for Christian Civilisation. England has perhaps forgotten that the Muslim and Indian civilisations are the oldest and had reached their climax in former days. It was when the English had no knowledge of civilisation at all and were living like wild beasts. In Germany every school or college student knows that the best civilisation ever found in the universe was the Indian and Muslim civilisation. Apart from bygone days even now India has got many scholars, politicians, philosophers, engineers and other experts who are in no way inferior to the British.

Dr. Goebbels is no fool.

* * *

Two years ago, when I saw Trotsky in Mexico, he prophesied that the coming European war would lead to revolutions everywhere. The first revolution, he said, would be in Russia. Stalin had forgotten Lincoln's maxim that you cannot fool all the people all the time. "Stalin had gone too far in betrayal." I have often thought of this conversation as dubious news of purges and massacres has filtered through from the Soviet Union, but until Stalin embarked on a war of aggression, his power seemed to me safe enough. Now, I agree, he has really betrayed too many people. I am thinking most of the unfortunate Red Army soldiers whose betrayal seems to me the worst of all. For twenty years they have been ceaselessly told that foreign capitalists would attack Russia, that they would have to fight Fascism; that a socialist country would never commit an act of aggression; that the Red Army was strong to defend the revolution and the soil of Russia. No one doubts that it would have done so courageously, if not efficiently. But the Finnish war is a different affair altogether. No masses rise to support them. Finnish workers, like others, defend their liberties. In the circumstances I see no reason to disbelieve the statements of Russian prisoners and the extracts from the diaries of Russian dead reporting the dismay which officers and men alike feel at the appalling conditions in which they fight. The Russian soldiers obviously feel morally betrayed. Their terrible losses are only explicable by a lack of desire to fight. Add to that gross inefficiency due no doubt to the fact that Stalin has shot his best officers. But I do not accept Trotsky's interested prophecy, speedy revolution. Even if the Finns hold out for many months, who is there left in Russia with the authority or capacity available to lead a revolution?

* * *

How many people to-day could draw even an approximately correct map of Eastern Europe? A general knowledge paper at the moment might well include a question about the present frontiers of Hungary and Russia or, moving North, ask, for

instance, whether the Russians could advance into Norway without going through Sweden. Towns and frontiers most of us had never heard of crop up in the newspapers every day, and maps of six months ago are not much help. For that reason, I am very grateful for the Serial Map Service, which is sending me their up-to-date maps for review. The maps are printed by Philip and Son and competently edited with current commentaries by specialists and historians. Most of them are too small, but nevertheless extremely useful. The latest addition is Finland, showing where the fighting is taking place and giving valuable details about the climate and the places where the ice is "fast" or "pack" or "drifting." I hope this will save me from blunders. I remember in the famous press survey which they contributed to the *New Republic* after the last war, Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz showed that the *New York Times* had dealt with the news of the Russian war in a way calculated to suit their own wishes rather than the facts of geography. A long series of towns with unpronounceable names were stated to have fallen to the arms of the White generals: after a month or so of these victories someone looked at an atlas on which Russian villages were marked and found that the places taken were all in the rear! In short, the White troops had retreated about a thousand miles during a period in which the American public were told that they were rapidly advancing. Actually, of course, that criminal war against the U.S.S.R. consolidated the Bolsheviks in power, convinced them of the undying hostility of the capitalist Powers, vastly increased the suffering of the Soviet population and is one of the most important historic factors leading to the present misery in Finland. One can learn more than geography from studying maps.

* * *

Why do public schoolboys dislike cheese? A meeting of school medical officers took place in London the other day to discuss rationing and how to make the best of it, and one after another declared that cheese, which it was hoped would supplement the butter ration, was an unpopular dish. Only two spoke to the contrary effect. The medical officer of Wellington College said that his boys liked cheese in any form, but especially toasted or roasted, and the medical officer of Christ's Hospital said that he had no difficulty in getting the boys to eat cheese, although they preferred something done to it beforehand. He said that it was not easy in a large public school to produce luxuries like Welsh rarebit, but a good deal could be done with cheese mixed with macaroni, sphagetti, tomato, and the like. The loathing of boys for fat meat is more understandable than their aversion from cheese, but it was said to be the experience that while they despise mutton fat they will eat pork fat. The pig, indeed, may prove a friend in need. One medical officer in charge of a number of A.R.P. workers mentioned that a vote was taken as to whether for their Christmas dinner they should have turkey or pork, and, rather surprisingly, out of about forty all but two voted for pork. This same medical man said that those concerned for the nutrition of the young generation, especially in poor neighbourhoods, ought to be grateful to the fish and chips shops so often sniffed at, both literally and metaphorically. He said that fish and chips did at least provide a really solid meal of high protein and considerable fat value, a matter of importance in a poor community where dietetic ruts run very deep.

* * *

The Sadler's Wells Ballet after years of careful training and organisation has now been built into a solid, popular and artistic success. If it were sent abroad on a tour it would probably enjoy the same outstanding success as the Old Vic company. But now it is threatened with destruction by the Ministry of Labour. Four men only are concerned: without these the ballet cannot continue, and unfortunately exemption from military service has been refused to them, though this seems to have been given to some of the actors in NAAFI. Trained dancers, unlike actors, are so few as to be irreplaceable, and it is obviously improvident to unpin so valuable an edifice as the Sadler's Wells Ballet for the sake of four recruits. If Mr. Ernest Brown were personally in possession of the facts I believe he might reverse the decision.

* * *

The following extract from the *Daily Telegraph* of Jan. 10th was sent in for "This England."

> On a charge of having published a blasphemous libel, Arthur Reynolds Woodhall, 47, proprietor of the Mayfair Hotel, Jersey, described as a free-lance photographer, was at Jersey Assizes yesterday sentenced to a month's imprisonment.
>
> Mr. Clifford Orange, Chief Aliens Officer, stated that when Woodhall called at his office at St. Helier to obtain an exit permit his passport contained two photographs, one of which showed Woodhall lying on the beach wearing bathing drawers, and with arms outstretched. Sketched in were a cross and other marks, making the picture what Mr. Orange described as a representation of Christ crucified.

The rare use of the law of blasphemous libel is usually justified on the ground that some action has caused public scandal and resentment. Nothing of the sort seems to have occurred here. The man seems to be an eccentric. What possible reason is there for a month's imprisonment?

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to X.Y.Z.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

> He (Mr. Chamberlain) is absolutely entitled (after taking the best advice at his disposal) to choose his own side and to allot them their places in the field. There will be no complaint if he finds it desirable to make more and more frequent changes. No one, after all, expects to bowl right through the innings, and there is no discredit in being given a rest.—The *Times* on the dismissal of Mr. Hore-Belisha.

> The Red Army, side by side with the Finnish workers, forges onward through the blizzard.—Ivor Montague in the *Labour Monthly*.

> An amusing situation has arisen among well-known sportswomen who are now stationed at a W.A.T.S. officers' training unit on the South Coast.
>
> Miss Elizabeth Glascock, the squash player, is training the cricketers, Myrtle Maclagan and Kitty de Gex (Oxford), for whom she "fagged" at the Royal School, Bath.—*News Chronicle*.

WHO IS AGAINST RATIONING?

> [When a man reads the leader column of the Daily Express, which goes under the name of Opinion, he always says, "That's just what I say."
>
> When a woman reads it, she declares, "That's what I have always said." *Daily Express*, Jan. 5.]

The first date put forward for rationing was November 13. But long before that, a chaotic situation had arisen in butter, bacon and sugar supplies. Early in November, for instance, Mass-Observation wrote round to selected observers living in every type of district all over the country. In every case and every area there was a heavy shortage of butter, a lesser shortage of bacon and sugar. Butter was equally short in town and country, bacon was much shorter in the towns, and sugar was much shorter in the country. For every 100 people who felt strongly about butter shortage, 60 complained about bacon, 20 about sugar.

In the same month we collected through our national panel of part-time observers the main grumbles from all over England. Giving the largest, Black-out, as index = 100, we found Food a clear second both in town and country, thus:

Main Grumbles	Town	Country
Black-out	100	100
Food	66	68
Fuel, petrol	44	50
Evacuation	37	64
Prices	42	39
Lack of amusements	30	21
Transport	38	14
Lack of news	36	21

So by mid-November there was strong feeling about food supplies, despite complacent utterances by Ministers.

Indeed, Government spokesmen gave no indication that a real food muddle existed, perhaps because, as Sir Samuel Hoare put it, it would be psychologically undesirable to admit the need for rationing so early in the war. It might be psychologically undesirable in terms of the German reaction, but in terms of the Home Front it was psychologically and physically very undesirable indeed that chaos and bewilderment should prevail under a façade of dietetic pangloss. But then, our present leaders always have an eye on the possible reaction in Rumania, and forget about Surbiton.

At the same time food prices were rocketing while wages lagged behind. It might therefore have been concluded, without any further analysis, that the great majority of Britons earning under £5 a week, must be beginning to feel strongly the need for control both of prices and of distribution. Mass-Observation confirmed this by interviewing on a sample basis, in its two special study areas, Metrop (London) and Worktown (Lancs). In the second week of November we found, in answer to the question "What do you think of the Government rationing scheme?":

	Percentage having this attitude			
	Male		Female	
Attitude	Under 30	Over 30	Under 30	Over 30
In favour.. ..	52	54	56	55
Half and half ..	9	6	12	10
Against	23	22	19	20
Don't know ..	16	18	13	15

Men and women of all ages agreed fairly closely, therefore, in giving a majority support to rationing.

Moreover, on a class breakdown, we found the artisan class least against rationing (20 per cent.), and the unskilled working class most doubtful (19 per cent.). Heavy opposition, the sort that found its way into the press, came from the better-off sections of the community. If we glance at the existing evidence of the food habits of the different classes, the reasons for this may be clearer. Crawford and Broadley give the following relevant figures in *The People's Food*:

	Average weekly consumption in Class:			
	Upper	Middle	Artisan & Upper Working	Unskilled Workers
	Ozs.	Ozs.	Ozs.	Ozs.
Butter	11.3	10.3	7.2	4.5
Margarine ..	1.5	1.4	2.4	3.7
Bacon	6.0	6.1	4.5	3.6
Sugar	17.9	17.2	16.8	15.2

It will thus be seen that the proposed butter ration is only just below the average consumption of the unskilled worker and the bacon ration is actually above; it is in bacon and butter needs that there is the biggest class distinction. Sugar is a relatively classless commodity.

Yet rationing was postponed from November 13th until December. In December it was postponed again until January 8th.

It was, above all, the Beaverbrook press which opposed rationing and which, by the usual business of representing itself as public opinion, helped the Cabinet into a series of delays and dilly-dallies. With that inconsistency which characterises so much of its activity, on November 7th the *Daily Express* carried a full-length story compiled from material sent in by its staff reporters all over the country. This showed a widespread food shortage, and in some places violent feelings. In Cardiff chain stores were planning a mass meeting of retailers and wholesalers to protest against the shortage of butter in South Wales. In Oxford the position was "acute." Yet on November 10th the *Express* stated:

> Co-ops have decided to ignore the assurances of Mr. W. S. Morrison, the Food Minister, that there is a plentiful supply of most commodities in the country, and are to ask the Prime Minister to receive seven of their chiefs.
>
> They want to persuade Mr. Chamberlain to introduce a rationing scheme immediately, to cover butter, bacon, sugar, meat and tea.
>
> Behind this move is an admission that in some parts of the country the co-operative distributive system is failing to function fully.

By this time the *Daily Express* had launched a violent attack on Mr. Pool, and daily caricatured and guyed him, publicising every possible bad point about the activities of the different Government controls and pools. By November 14th they had found a Mr. Pool of their own, Mr. J. H. Poole, organising secretary of the National Federation of Small Shopkeepers; and violently supported him in a campaign "for the small shopkeeper." On November 14th the *Express* announced that:

> The private trader does not believe rationing of any food is necessary. To-day he comes to London to tell the Government why. . . . He will be represented by five delegates of the National Federation of Small Shopkeepers. . . .
>
> This afternoon they will call at the Home Office to argue their case for the restoration of the eight o'clock closing hour on week-days and 9 o'clock on Saturdays. Then on to the Ministry of Food.
>
> Their federation has a membership of 45,000 representing private traders in forty-eight towns.

When the *Daily Express* says that small shopkeepers are against rationing, as it repeatedly did throughout its campaign, its results are strikingly different from those of Mass-Observation, which in interviewing a series of shopkeepers found three in favour of rationing to every one against (mid-November). Observers also looked into the N.F.S.S. Inquiries from unions, chambers of trade, etc., in London, drew a complete blank; eventually we found that it was an organisation run from Leicester, with a localised distribution, and without any southern headquarters. Our correspondence and ordinary inquiries were not answered. The *Daily Express*, however, managed by repeated news stories, photographs of officials (laying a wreath on the Cenotaph) to make out that the shopkeepers of England and the public were all behind the redoubtable Mr. Poole. At the same time it ran a series of stories to prove that the Co-op. was unable to supply its customers and by implication that other shops were able to do so; and heightened the effect by a judicious placing of items unfavourable to the Co-op. and the judicious neglect of items unfavourable to private shopkeepers. By November 21st it had worked itself up into a wild state. Its editorial on that day read:

> The public should revolt against the food rationing system, that dreadful and terrible iniquity which some of the Ministers want to adopt.
>
> There is no necessity for the trouble and expense of rationing, merely because there may be a shortage of this or that inessential commodity.
>
> Why should old women be forced to wait here and there before the shops for their supplies?
>
> This form of folly is difficult and almost impossible to understand.

To dismiss this campaign as just another newspaper stunt is to neglect two facts, first that the *Express* has two and a half million readers and secondly that rationing has been repeatedly postponed. Moreover Lord Beaverbrook's attack on rationing is tied up with a general campaign against Pools, Bureaucrats and every piece of state activity which threatens to co-ordinate business activities in the interests of the whole community. In the case of pool commodities (like pool margarine) there is an obvious explanation for the attack. No paper can run unless it carries advertisements, and branded goods are one of the richest sources of newspaper advertising. This also explains why, while the Government exhorts us to save, its publicity has been offset by a vigorous campaign of private enterprise in favour of spending. The *Express* claims to represent the small man, but the evidence we have collected shows that, though it may bewilder and confuse the people, it does not express their wishes. It simply identifies them with the needs of certain commercial interests. Unfortunately the Government seems still to believe that the loudest voice in the press is the voice of the people: What else can explain its dithering about rationing when public interest and public opinion alike demanded it?

Recently Sir John Simon remarked that "most of the problems of conducting a war consist of a conflict of arguments." But in such arguments, the voice of a few private interests seems to be getting an undue amplification over and above the voice of public interest on the Home Front. If, as it would seem, the Government has been genuinely misled about public opinion

and feelings on the subject of rationing, and has therefore delayed it, then the pressing need for the Government to have adequate and impartial machinery for testing and measuring public reaction is clear. If, on the other hand, the Government have delayed and dithered with rationing (over four months), for other reasons connected with business and vested interests, then they have misled and bewildered the people. They have done the latter anyway. TOM HARRISSON

BALLADE OF WAR AIMS

"FOR King and Country" they would shout
When I was young and—so they say—
They died to kick the Kaiser out
And make the wicked Germans pay,
And little thought there'd come a day
When Chamberlain would make it plain
Our aims were now the other way—
To bring the Kaisers back again.

Lord Halifax is much in doubt,
He telephones the Quai d'Orsai
And asks them what the war's about
And when it ends—as well he may;
Then boldly speaks Daladier:
"We fight to win, but our refrain
Must be (please bid your Bishops pray)
To bring the Kaisers back again."

For since the Polish army's rout,
Our best laid plans gang a' agley,
The Tsars no longer wield the knout,
But Sickles reap their midnight hay.
For no one knew where Poland lay
With Uncle Jo in the Ukraine—
Our plighted word, our yea is—nay,
To bring the Kaisers back again.

ENVOI

Prince, politicians, priests of Bray
And journalists of nimble brain,
What is the *next* act in the play
To bring the Kaisers back again?

REGINALD REYNOLDS

POSTMAN'S KNOCK

IT is not surprising that many people were stirred to enthusiasm during the week by the celebration of the centenary of the penny post. For some reason most people consider letters good things. This optimism is obviously hereditary, for almost before they can read and write children respond to the postman's knock with quickened heartbeats. They fly to the door as though expecting to find a gift from Heaven in the letter-box. I never knew a well-constituted human being who did not love the sight of a postman. Telegraph boys are different. They are little imps, potential heralds of disaster. They frighten women and children. For human beings are as pessimistic about telegrams as they are optimistic about letters. That presumably is why the Post Office has in recent years invented the "greetings" telegram, warning the householder with its gay decorations that there is nothing to be frightened about. Even so, I fancy it will be a long time before the telegraph boy becomes a popular figure. Most people are still convinced that no sensible person would waste sixpence on sending any but bad news.

The postman, on the other hand, retains his popularity in spite of the fact that he lets us down with almost every delivery. The letters we hoped for do not arrive. The bills that we feared tumble through the slit in the door in threes and fours. Trade circulars inviting us to buy overcoats or shirts or wine or what-not would soon snow us under did we not possess a wastepaper basket. Bookmakers appeal to us courteously to make use of their services in piling up a fortune. Sponsors of good causes invite us to cast our bread upon the waters of the Seven Seas. Publishers commend their books to us with honest enthusiasm. Young poets and novelists, labouring under the illusion that art is short and life is long, send their manuscripts to us for our criticism. These things make up probably three-quarters or more of what the eagerly expected postman brings us. No one has disappointed us so often and no one has been so often forgiven.

I receive few letters—real letters, I mean, letters from my friends—for I write few. I am one of those who intend to write letters, but either I cannot find note-paper or there is something else to do, and the letters seldom get written. Procrastination is the enemy of letter-writing: there is nothing in regard to which it is easier to procrastinate. Either the last post has gone, or the next collection does not take place for another two hours. If I am in the country I do not—unless I am in bed—like to waste the morning indoors, and in the evening the light is too dim for writing, or there is news to listen to on the wireless. W. B. Yeats began one of his poems: "All things can tempt me from this craft of verse." All things, alas, can tempt me from this craft of letter-writing. I can think of a friend three hundred miles away without feeling a compulsion to let him know that I am thinking of him or to tell him what I have been doing and whom I have been meeting lately. If he urgently wants to know how I am, he can send me a "reply-paid" telegram.

If I ever harbour a grudge against the postman, it is when he brings a letter from a friend that all but insists on an answer. A letter of this kind can keep one's conscience uneasy for days. One is miserable at lunch because, instead of writing an answer to the letter, one has dawdled over a crossword puzzle. One goes to bed with a heavy heart because, though one has had several free quarters-of-an-hour during the day, none of them has somehow been an appropriate time for answering a letter. Who is there among procrastinators who has not often felt a stab of pain, lying awake in the small hours, as he thinks tenderly of some distant correspondent never written to. The sense of duty, I am sure, is more highly developed in the non-letter-writer than in other people. And how it hurts!

With other people even the receipt of a postcard is incitement enough to the filling of reams of paper. I have known women to spend week-ends in the country writing long letters apparently to everybody whose name they could remember. As I have looked at their fat letters waiting to be posted I have sometimes wondered what they could find to write about at such length. I find it difficult to fill two sides of a sheet of paper; but these stay-in-the-house letter-writers seem able to babble on about themselves for eight or twelve pages. They write, I suspect, for the sake of writing, as people talk for the sake of talking. And how triumphant they look as crowded envelope is piled on crowded envelope on the table, each of them soon (if it has no other virtue) to be an excuse for a postman's knock! Had Sir Rowland Hill foreseen what a mass of superfluous letter-writing his reform would set in motion, he might well, being a puritan, have thought twice before publishing the pamphlet that did the mischief.

The worst of it is, of course, that every reform or invention leads to abuses. Consider the misery caused to quiet householders by the provision of cheap telephones. No man with a telephone in the house can any longer be sure of being able to sit through a meal undisturbed. He is waked by the telephone out of his morning sleep; he is pursued by the telephone into his bathroom. Complete strangers ring him up as a more certain means of getting an answer out of him than writing a letter. Nor has the telephone bell the virtue of the postman's knock as an inducer of the sensation of hope. It is mainly an irritant, making one feel that one must hurry to answer it. The postman knocks and, unless he has a parcel, goes away. The telephone bell, however, insists on a reply. It is selfish, ill-mannered, shrill. It is the shrew of communication—useful, even indispensable, but how unlovable!

In theory, no doubt, everything that makes it easier for

human beings to communicate with each other is a blessing. The printing-press, the railway train, the steamship, the aeroplane, the telephone and the postal system are all potential agencies for linking human beings in a universal brotherhood. When we talk about brotherhood, however, we usually forget that the first pair of brothers of whom there is any record were Cain and Abel, and that what Cain and Abel most needed was not to be brought closer together, but to be kept at a safe distance from each other. Too many of these modern means of communication seem merely to bring Cain and Abel into too close proximity. Cain in an aeroplane certainly does not always feel like being his brother's keeper.

Let us, however, not be pessimistic about the results of reforms and inventions. Let us by an act of faith believe that they probably do more good than harm. We of the twentieth have deceived the hopes of the nineteenth century; but it is possible that our grandchildren may prove to be saner than their grandfathers and worthier of the best of their Victorian forbears. After all, it takes some time to get accustomed to a world in which space has been all but abolished. The spacious world is gone, however, and we may one day adapt ourselves to the change. And then, there is no harm in imagining everything will be all right.

At the same time, I sometimes wish that the abolition of space had taken place more gradually. I would gladly have lived in a world in which it stopped at the penny post or, perhaps, the railway-train. The postman and the engine-driver have never been messengers of evil on the scale on which the airman and the wireless announcer have often been. The worst that can be said of the postman is that he occasionally brings an abusive letter, but what a trivial thing that is! At the time of the Suffragettes and the Home Rule controversy, I used to get scores of such letters. "Go back to your native bogs, you Irish bogtrotter," and so forth. In the end one began to feel a curious friendliness for the people who wasted so many stamps to say so little that had any bearing on anything. At the worst, an abusive letter was better than an income-tax demand. At best, it was comic relief. As for blackmailing letters, not having any money, I have never had one.

On the whole, then, like everybody else, I bless the name of Sir Rowland Hill. He provided me with one of the earliest enthusiasms of my life — postage stamps — an invention which, according to the Encyclopaedia, he suggested in the sentence: "Perhaps the difficulties might be obviated by using a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp, and covered at the back with a glutinous wash which, by applying a little moisture, might be attached to the back of the letter." To have invented the postage stamp, the penny post, and the postman as we now know him is surely to have a claim to be one of the least maleficent benefactors of the human race. It is well that he should be commemorated in the more stirring than martial music of the postman's knock. Y. Y.

CASUS BELISHA

When Whitehall brews a private storm
Dense clouds the sacred precincts muffle
While the Olympians perform
A shuffle.
When Ministers creep out or in,
Mid silence and suspense acute,
It shows there is a rift within
The lute.

But painful difference was there none
The day that Hore-Belisha fell
A Minister had seldom done
So well.
To implement a policy
By all the Cabinet approved
Seems insufficient grounds to be
Removed.

Therefore conjecture seeks the cause
In simple faith, or garbled fact,
Or some infringement of the laws
Of tact.
And some suspect another case
Of common military pique
While others confidently trace
A clique.

Nor can the Government evade
Erroneous but widespread rumour
That somebody has somehow made
A bloomer,
Until the Premier takes control
And, laying all the story bare,
Sheds floods of darkness on the whole
Affair.

SAGITTARIUS

Miscellany

THE GOLDEN CUCKOO

MR. DENIS JOHNSON'S *The Moon and the Yellow River* was a most remarkable tragi-comedy. *The Golden Cuckoo* is a remarkable tragical-farce, which is equivalent to saying that there is something poetical about it. And to say that is to give a hint to the playgoer that he must be content to enjoy it without understanding exactly its point. A realistic fantasia requires subtle attention, not cleverness, in the spectator, and this kind of attention is more commonly found in simple than in sophisticated audiences. I have unfortunately missed the comments of London upon this play, but I shall not be surprised if I find when I look up the criticisms of my colleagues, that they have complained that it is not possible to know what the play is driving at. They are sure, however, to have praised the acting, which is fine down to the smallest detail of the smallest part, and above all the superb performance of Mr. Frank Pettingell in a part which must have reminded them, physically and spiritually, of Chesterton. The eloquent Mr. Dotheright describes himself as a "free-lance obituarist" and he tells us he sometimes supplements that precarious livelihood by taking children to school and helping them with their sums. He is a glorious Mountain of Humility—not the kind that stoops and "makes terms" but the kind that soars and fights. He becomes a torrent of indignation when justice is denied to him or others. He is the embodiment of mild self-forgetful dignity, the least censorious of exacting idealists and the most gentle of pugnacious revolutionaries. He is also a little mad. Yes, God has told him he is right but also mad. His short sojourn in a lunatic asylum did not make him bitter, but did not change his view of the meanness of the men who rule the world. He lives in a barn; he cleans his plates with a jet from the garden hose; he pays when he can and is not troubled when he can't. And the people round him, the timid Mr. Pennywise (a lawyer's clerk), Mr. Haybottle (an irate cabman who fought in the Boer War), Mr. Pull (a cautious retired municipal official), Mrs. Golightly (a querulous little dipsomaniac), Mrs. Vanderbilt (his servant) who robs him and everyone else, are his admirers, though he is capable of landing them in scrapes. The pleasure given by *The Golden Cuckoo* is mainly the pleasure and fun of contemplating this—I wish I could remember his string of high-sounding Christian names—this giant of romantic detachment, this mad, protesting founder of "a one-man republic," living and moving among amusingly petty and worried little people.

The occasion which brought this great harmless howitzer into action, and then into the police-court, and then into the asylum, was a dispute with the editor of *The Comet*, the local paper. Mr. Lowd had commissioned him to write an obituary notice of an inventor of artificial manure for £1 6*s*. 8*d*. The article, written with all the grandiosity and care characteristic

of its author, was accepted, but when he asked for payment he was told the contract was off. The eminent man of science had not died after all; the article was useless. The second act, Scene 1, presents the failure of Mr. Dotheright at the newspaper office, with his odd following at his back, to extort his fee from the editor. This treatment acts as a trumpet call to all the smouldering rebellious impulses in the author. The sacred principle of justice, the holy bond between man and man, has been outraged, and that night he raises the standard of revolt and breaks into a closed telephone box to announce it to the world. (The mad speech of the founder of the New One-Man Republic is fantastic and fine.) He is arrested. Meanwhile something disconcerting has happened from the editor's point of view: the subject of the obituary notice has been murdered. The proprietor is somehow concerned; he knew it would happen and announced it too soon. It is of vital importance that that foreknowledge should not connect him with it. The editor attempts to bribe Mr. Dotheright—of course in vain. But he is certified. This part of the plot is not quite as clear as it should be. But the play is memorable.

Where do these events take place? If only all the characters spoke with an Irish accent and intonation and not Miss Maire O'Neil alone, who plays the part of the Help to perfection, then the response of the audience at the Duchess Theatre both to the sardonic touches and to "the chirp of Ariel overhead" would have been immediate and not hesitating. They would have known where they were. The characters, and above all their relations to each other, are Irish; but admirably as they are played individually and excellently as they act together, an element of unnecessary unreality is thus introduced into the comedy by their English speech. Thus a play in its nature properly fantastic, is made to seem more bewilderingly unreal than it is. How unnecessarily puzzling *The Playboy of the Western World* would be if it were presented as though it might have happened on the Yorkshire coast!

DESMOND MACCARTHY

HURLY-BURLY

THE Royal Academy has generously opened the portals of Burlington House to every sort of contemporary artist. There are 2,219 exhibits, ranging from Miss Barbara Hepworth's abstract sculpture to a portrait of H.R.H. the Princess Elizabeth "painted in feathers" by Miss J. Mary Finch of the Royal Miniature Society. Twenty-four Art Societies have collaborated and all the exhibitors have agreed to resign to charitable purposes one-half of the price of any work sold. To criticise in any way a scheme so well intentioned must seem ungracious, and the generosity of the artists, almost all of whom are particularly hard hit by the war, is beyond praise. Moreover it seems generally agreed that, apart from its charitable purpose, a comprehensive exhibition such as this is useful and ought to be made an annual event. At the risk of being the only critic to take so disobliging a view, I venture to disagree.

All this talk of "comprehensiveness" seems to me based upon a misunderstanding. Any piece of canvas or board covered more or less completely with pigment can be called a picture. But what is there in common between a work by, say, Mr. Sickert and one by Mr. X, Member of the Society of Marine Painters? Both are constructed of similar materials, and both represent, more or less recognisably, aspects of the visible world. But in function they are no more alike than a Ting bowl and the insulator on a telegraph post, both of which are curved constructions of white china. In this exhibition six out of seven works have a clear purpose—to please the spectator with an image of some sight that he would find agreeable or interesting, a bluebell-wood, his daughter, a picturesque Italian street or Richard II inspecting the roof of Westminster Hall. There remains a small minority of works the purpose of which is entirely different. These are calculated to please the spectator, independently of the natural beauty or interest of the subjects represented, by intrinsic harmony of colour, design and texture. I have over-simplified the distinction, of course, for in works of the second type the artist usually communicates his sensibility to natural beauty, and in consequence there is no sharp frontier between the two types of work. But about the immense majority of the exhibits nobody with a trained eye could have a moment's doubt: they fall obviously into one or other category. And the hanging committee have in practice gone far towards recognising this distinction; for most works of the second type have been isolated in Galleries VII and VIII. Here I found the most charming picture in the show, Mary Potter's *Golden Kipper*—and near it some lions in the Amphitheatre waiting for the Christians! On the other hand Gallery V is devoted exclusively to marine subjects, and it happens that with only one or two exceptions these are conspicuous specimens of the first type. I fancy that those whose taste is most directly opposite to mine will agree with me that the pictures in this room are entirely different in function from those in Galleries VII and VIII. Can there be a single human being who would claim to derive satisfaction from the two types of picture here contrasted? To avoid misunderstandings, two further points had better be made clear. A picture of the second type may be just as worthless aesthetically as one of the first type. And the distinction does not turn upon "modernism." It happens not unnaturally that most pictures of the second type produced to-day are in a "modern" idiom; a contemporary artist is hardly more likely to paint in the style of Ingres than a contemporary of Tintoret to paint in the style of John Bellini. But there are works in this exhibition, like Professor Fred Brown's *The Ivy Arch* and Mr. MacColl's Still Life, that are untainted by "modernism" and that quite evidently belong to the second type.

If the difference between these functions is as profound as I believe it to be, the notion of a "comprehensive" exhibition becomes difficult to defend. Nobody would ask for an exhibition comprehending motor cars and illustrated books, or an exhibition comprehending flowering shrubs and musical instruments. Yet such an exhibition as either of these would be convenient compared with the gargantuan salmagundi at Burlington House. The proximity of motor-cars or flowers would not seriously disturb the amateur of fine editions or violins. But this jostling multitude of pictures that make little pretence of being works of art appalls and exhausts the eye, destroying the state of mind in which appreciation is possible. If you go straight to Galleries VII and VIII, you can see such pictures as are usually on view at the more reputable dealers'—but here so huddled on top of one another that the finer points in most of them cannot be perceived. If, on the other hand, you start by searching in the previous rooms for the few works of art so successfully concealed in them, you are likely, by the time you reach Gallery VII, to feel disgusted by the very sight of pigment in horror. With the best of intentions, the Royal Academy has contrived to make even good pictures look unattractive.

Imagine a Music Festival, at Leeds, perhaps, or at Worcester, which aimed at being "comprehensive." All English composers would be represented, of course, and consequently even when a programme included a work by Dr. Vaughan Williams or Mr. Walton, this would be sandwiched between a dozen popular songs and the latest novelties in tea-time music, played by Mr. Sandy Macpherson. It is certain that no musical critic could be found to applaud such an enterprise, even if the proceeds were promised to the Red Cross—indeed such an enterprise could never eventuate, for serious composers like Dr. Vaughan Williams and Mr. Walton would not think of collaborating in an obvious absurdity. I suggest that the exhibition at Burlington House is little less ridiculous.

The Royal Academy is given by the Government rent-free one of the most valuable sites in the West End. It can thus afford to take no commission upon the works sold at its annual exhibitions, an advantage which naturally appeals to painters, especially young painters. They incline therefore to dream

of "capturing" the Academy. I wonder if this desire will survive the present exhibition? But even if the Royal Academicians decide to remain exclusive in the summer, it seems possible that they will regularly condescend in the winter to invite to their saloons the riff-raff of Wilson Steers, Matthew Smiths and William Coldstreams. If so, I can but hope that the riff-raff will refuse the invitation. There are now so many alert dealers that any tolerably accomplished artist can exhibit his pictures; and though he will have to pay a commission on sales, his work will be seen to incomparably better advantage than in the confusion of Burlington House. By all means let the Royal Academicians make a common front with the Society of Marine Artists, the Royal Society of Miniature Painters and even the Society of Miniaturists—they have a common aim and common methods. And then a cinema-organ might advantageously be installed in the Central Hall to enhance the gratification of the visitors. But artists of the sort that Mr. Mumings so much deplores would be wiser in future to remain outside the sacred portals. They are not liked by their hosts, and I believe that by joining the hurly-burly they can do no service either to themselves or to the public.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

A CHANGE OF HEART

ON the last day of the year 1939 Sir Adrian Boult, the B.B.C. director of music, broadcast a talk on the "music plans for the New Year" of the B.B.C. This and the B.B.C. programme for the coming Spring show what the *Daily Telegraph* described on January 6th as "a welcome change of heart." This change of heart has resulted not only from the complaints of music-lovers but also from a mass of evidence by correspondence and otherwise which showed that the adverse criticisms by Mr. Ernest Newman and others on the wholesale jettisoning of good music, with which the B.B.C. heralded England's entry into the war in September, 1939, was supported by opinion all over the country.

It is a sad fact that no English musician was strong enough to resist this capitulation of the B.B.C. to the advocates of crooning bands and other forms of so-called "light" entertainment. Having listened to a great deal of this "light" entertainment purveyed by the B.B.C. in the first month of the war, I can only give my personal opinion that, for most of it, the epithet "light" was singularly inappropriate. A banal facetiousness as dull and heavy as lead was its chief characteristic, and a natural gaiety and liveliness was seemingly just what was most difficult to obtain. Luckily, in music we are not wholly dependent upon contemporary production. We have a solid legacy of the past which is inexhaustibly satisfying and stimulating, and it is good to hear from Sir Adrian Boult that the B.B.C. will not only maintain its symphony orchestra as the "backbone of our resources" but will make use of this backbone and show it in public in such provincial centres as Cheltenham, Newport, Bath, Bristol, etc. It is equally good news to hear that the B.B.C. will make use of other musical organisations like the Hallé, London Philharmonic and London Symphony orchestras. All these should be encouraged by the B.B.C. to give public concerts all over the country, exploring and opening up new territory and not only repeating concerts in the most familiar concert-giving centres. A better use for the B.B.C. funds than this could hardly be imagined, and if the Director of the B.B.C. has any far-sighted vision of the duties of the organisation he directs (as I am sure from his antecedents that he must have) then he must show some of the backbone shown by commercial men in pursuing their own interests and *insist* on the active expenditure of the B.B.C. in maintaining and developing the good and not in corrupting the taste of the coming generation—by which I mean the taking care to preserve the highest possible musical and cultural standards irrespective of whether this policy is popular with the million-circulation press or not.

It is pitiful to see musicians and literary men displaying lack of courage and faith in their own arts and ideals. Unfortunately, through the break in our musical tradition caused by Puritanism and the sharp division between the social habits of the King and the Court in London on the one side and the bulk of the population in the rest of the country on the other, music dropped out of the national life and has not even yet regained its proper prestige. Music almost ceased to be practised by the people at large. Even choral singing, which has always been a national characteristic, suffered. The flow of musical inspiration in England was cut off at the source, and the majority of professional musicians all through the eighteenth century were imported from Italy and Germany under the Georges.

The English, which in the age of Shakespeare had been perhaps the most musical people in Europe, not even excluding the Italians, became so unproductive that during the whole of the nineteenth century foreign countries looked upon England as the "Land Without Music."

I am sure this is the reason that even now when a renaissance of music in England has vividly taken place our English musicians lack prestige and authority. It is incredible to me that the Director of Music at the B.B.C. should not have been able to withstand the landslide which occurred at the beginning of the war. The only prominent musician in England who seems to show in public life and as against other public men a proper and adequate respect for music is Sir Thomas Beecham. But owing to Sir Thomas being also the possessor of a witty and at times almost malicious and certainly provocative spirit, his words have not always been taken with the seriousness which the latter-day Englishman has learned only to attach to portentousness and solemnity. Also, Sir Thomas is rarely diplomatic, and seemingly does not mind upon whose toes he treads. Also, he uses exaggeration like an artist; but the average person does not understand the aesthetic virtues of a proper exaggeration (the "beauty of excess"), and is inclined to discount wholly remarks which may include something which is not literally true. I wish, however, that more English musicians would stand up against the Philistines as Sir Thomas Beecham does. In other words, that they should show themselves as artists and not as mere diplomatists.

Another feature of Sir Adrian Boult's speech which is welcome is his declaration that he "hopes to get on with a monthly series of some kind" of modern music. This is certainly most important, and I cannot see why this should have been expressed as a "hope" instead of as a resolution. It is up to Sir Adrian to insist on the maintenance of a proper supply of modern music as well as a thoroughly comprehensive programme of classical music by the B.B.C. to the public. That is what Sir Adrian is there for. He is not there to accommodate music to the demands of the illiterate and uneducated, who demand solely to be "entertained" at the public expense by an inexhaustible outpouring of tripe. It may be true that it is hard to listen to good modern music, but I maintain that it is not hard but impossible to listen to the bulk of the B.B.C. so-called "light" music. People do not *listen* to it; they *overhear* it while doing something else. This is the prime difference between the two publics which the Director of the B.B.C. ought to bear constantly in mind. Another difference is that whereas *listeners* have been gained from the untrained and uncultivated public to the music-lovers, no recruits are ever gained the other way about.

W. J. TURNER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Child of Kensington," at the Tavistock Little Theatre

To tread in Laurence Housman's footsteps would seem both unwise and unnecessary, particularly at the present time; and although Mr. de Reyes' procession of early Victorian vignettes is well-produced and painstakingly accurate, it is difficult to avoid unfavourable comparisons with his more sophisticated rival. *The Child of Kensington* follows Queen Victoria's girlhood from 1825 to her first Privy Council, and in a series of picture-postcard incidents

illustrates the development of her famous obstinacy and other virtues. We see her sacrificing a doll to give money to a poor woman, rebelling against the cruel refinements of social education, meeting Albert and, finally, celebrating her accession by demanding a room of her own. A secondary theme is the jealous ambition of the Duchess of Kent, and her intrigues with dear Lehzen. Considering the theatre's limitations the production is competent and interesting. Much of the costume and furniture is genuinely period, and if the writing is a trifle unimaginative it does possess the restraint that imagination too often disregards. Miss Maureen Glynne and Miss Ursula Hanray as Victoria, the girl and the young woman, give performances at once fresh and accomplished, and show an almost startling resemblance to their originals. The rest of the large cast seem oppressed by the characters they portray, but Mr. Tony Wickham-Jones gives a quite superb little impression of the oafish and unfortunate Ernst. On the whole, the play seems uncalled for, but should give considerable pleasure to the obviously large Victorianophil public.

"The House of Women," at the Torch Theatre

The House of Women is a skilful dramatisation of Louis Bromfield's lengthy novel of Freud in nineteenth century Pennsylvania. The situation is almost traditional—a clever, eccentric old woman living in a large house with a dithering spinster sister and two passionate daughters, one sensual and the other bitterly religious—but the excellence of the dialogue makes even the conventional denouments (Aunt Hattie's tipsiness, the ravishment of the handsome clergyman) both gripping and credible. The necessary compression of a complex story throws a great strain on the acting which an able cast supports very well. Miss Winifred Willard is big-eyed and simple as the spinster, Miss Joyce Wodeman and Miss Dorothy Black show sacred and profane love in effective contrast, and Mr. Alan Judd is embarrassingly earnest as the attractive clergyman. Miss Louise Hampton as the cheroot-smoking matriarch dominates the stage as much as her part does the play, and gives a performance of such power and finesse that one welcomes the smallness of the theatre for enabling one to see her technique at close quarters. This is not an outstanding play but makes excellent theatre, and would probably repay production in the West End.

"The Light That Failed," at the Plaza

The treatment of fictional Great Painters on the screen has always presented a problem—to display their work or not to display their work. The usual method has been to show the back of the canvas and the faces of admiring spectators: provocative but on the whole satisfactory. *Love Affair* broke with tradition when Charles Boyer exhibited a work in an art dealer's window, but the painting was photographed from an angle, discreetly. In *The Light that Failed* discretion has been thrown to the wind, and Richard Heldar, the artist hero of Rudyard Kipling's story, not only displays several battle scenes worthy to be hung on the line of any Victorian Academy, but also finally paints a masterpiece in full view of the audience which must, had it survived, have become the Problem Picture of the year. There should be an immediate return to the back of the canvas method, for masterpieces like Richard Heldar's "Melancholia" alienate sympathies where they are badly needed. The dramatic climax of the picture centres around "Melancholia," the portrait of a street girl, Bessie (Ida Lupino). Bessie detests Heldar, not without reason, for ruining her affair with his friend Torpenhow (Walter Huston). When Heldar, after the final sitting, retires to his bedroom to go blind, Bessie rubs out the painting with turpentine as a revenge. If the work she destroyed had not already been seen, it would have been possible to feel outraged at this vandalism, and have wished, as did Torpenhow to kill Bessie; as it is one wants to decorate her for services to Art. Actually Ida Lupino's performance is so alive, so well-conceived, and so brilliantly performed that the emphasis of the film would in any case have been upset — the other characters, particularly the artist himself, seem colourless, hardly alive, when she is on the screen. Ronald Colman has been badly served by having a good deal of the Kipling dialogue put into his mouth, dialogue which seems oddly out of place in its new medium. Walter Huston is given no histrionic opportunities at all, and Muriel Angelus as Maisie, the nice girl in Heldar's life, has a very unsympathetic role; one feels as if none of the characters but Bessie has been understood at all. There is some excitement with Fuzzy Wuzzies and the British Square, but the picture is worth seeing for Ida Lupino's performance alone.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, January 13th—
- Charles Kimber: "The Aims of Federal Union," Economic Reform Club, 26 Grosvenor Place, 2.30.
- Sir Charles Trevelyan: "Democracy in the Soviet Union," Conway Hall, 3.
- "Madam Butterfly," 2; "Othello," 6.45. Sadler's Wells.

SUNDAY, January 14th—
- Laurence Housman: "Empire a Hindrance to Democracy," Conway Hall, 11.
- Beecham Sunday Concert, Queen's Hall, 2.45.

MONDAY, January 15th—
- Michael Carritt: "The Condition of the Workers and Peasants in India," 15 Percy Street, W.1, 7.

TUESDAY, January 16th—
- China Campaign Committee Luncheon, Shih-I Hsiung: "Modern Chinese Art," Young's Chinese Restaurant, Wardour Street, 1. Tickets, 2s. 6d., from 34 Victoria Street, S.W.1.
- P. W. Bartlett: "Christianity and an Early Peace." Friends House, 1.20.
- Rose Luxembourg Commemoration Meeting, Alliance Hall, Caxton Street, 7.30.
- "The Widow of Windsor," Tavistock Little Theatre.
- "The Beggar's Opera," Theatre Royal, Brighton.

WEDNESDAY, January 17th—
- Fabian Society Lunch Meeting. Speaker: C. R. Attlee. National Trade Union Club, 1. Tickets 2s. 6d.
- John Ramage: "The American Scene, Social Questions," Dick Sheppard Centre, 8.

THURSDAY, January 18th—
- Sir Richard Livingstone: "The Crisis of Civilisation," Royal Empire Soc., 2.
- F. Kingdon Ward: "Plant Hunting through the Centuries," Royal Institution, 3. And January 23rd and 30th.
- Tea-time Concert, organised by the Christian Council for Refugees. Artist: Emmy Heim. Queen Mary Hall, W.C.1, 5.15.
- Arts Theatre Ballet, Arts Theatre Club.

FRIDAY, January 19th—
- Lunch-time Concert, Menges String Quartet, Birkbeck College, 1.

Correspondence

UNEMPLOYMENT IN OXFORD

SIR,—It is unfortunate that the compiler of the note on the industrial situation in the Oxford district, which appeared in "A London Diary" in your issue of December 30th, did not make himself more conversant with the facts before indulging in unfounded strictures on Lord Nuffield and the Pressed Steel Company.

It is true that dislocation in the Morris Motor and Pressed Steel Company's factories, arising out of conditions due to the war, has resulted, temporarily, in an abnormal increase in local unemployment. Large-scale unemployment is a new feature in the industrial life of the Oxford district and, in the exceptional circumstances created by the war, we deemed it our duty to at once make contact with Lord Nuffield, the management of the Pressed Steel Industry and representatives of the workpeople concerned with the object of ascertaining whether any practical action could be taken to expedite the return to employment of the men who had been temporarily suspended owing to the change-over from peacetime production to war work. We found all those we approached (and notably Lord Nuffield) most ready to co-operate with us in this matter. We were satisfied, on the information to which we were given access by Government Departments, Lord Nuffield and the management of the Pressed Steel Industry, that the increase in local unemployment was one of the inevitable consequences of industrial dislocation arising out of war conditions, that the firms concerned had taken all practical action to ensure that the period of transition should be made as short as possible and that there was good reason to hope that the early weeks of 1940 would see a considerable increase in employment in the Morris undertakings and other local industries.

Between October and December there was a considerable decrease in the number of unemployed registered in the Oxford district, largely as a result of extended employment in the Morris and Pressed Steel industries. Apart from a temporary lull, due to the Christmas season, there is every reason to anticipate that the increase in local employment will continue at an accelerated rate. In these circumstances to speak of Oxford as "a distressed area" is to convey an impression of the local industrial situation which is not related to the real position.

We feel compelled to comment upon what we regard as an altogether unwarranted criticism of Lord Nuffield's attitude toward those who, owing to war conditions, have been suspended temporarily from employment in the industries with which he is associated.

It is to Lord Nuffield's initiative that the Oxford district owes the inception of a "Good Neighbours' Fund." His donation of £10,000, augmented by a generous contribution from the Pressed Steel Company, has already enabled the Mayors of Oxford and the adjacent Boroughs of Abingdon and Woodstock to assist some hundreds of households affected by the war or unemployment. The "Good Neighbours' Fund" is also dealing with applications for grants or loans made by persons resident in the Oxford district who are faced with problems in connection with mortgage repayments and similar financial commitments.

To infer, as your diarist appears to do, that Lord Nuffield is unmindful of the well-being of his own workpeople is so flagrant a travesty of the facts that we cannot allow the comment to pass without protest or challenge. Lord Nuffield's record, alike as employer and as a benefactor to the Oxford district, is, in itself, a sufficient answer to the insinuations of your correspondent.

Oxford. BICESTER,
H. M. Lieutenant for Oxfordshire
C. J. V. BELLAMY,
Mayor of Oxford.

[Critic writes: "The suggestion that my strictures were unfounded seem to rest on two arguments: (1) That Lord Bicester and the Mayor of Oxford have satisfied themselves that the unemployment in Cowley was 'inevitable'; (2) That Lord Nuffield has given and still gives large donations to good causes. As regards point one, I fear that our correspondents are more easily satisfied of the inevitability of unemployment in the case of war than I am. What made it inevitable in this case was that between them Lord Nuffield and the Government seem to have left all the preparations for adapting the factory to war purposes unmade. I still feel that this was lamentable. Point two is equally indecisive. All of us recognise the generosity of Lord Nuffield's many donations, but if Lord Bicester or Mr. Bellamy were to visit Cowley and talk to the workers, they would discover that (as I suggested) many Morris workers feel that the best sort of charity which an employer can show is to keep his workpeople in regular employment. Among Lord Nuffield's many donations, how many have been made to the City of Oxford, whose ratepayers—the Morris factory is derated—have to pay for the social services necessitated by the huge motor works? This is another question which Morris workers are inclined to ask. Finally I should be glad to receive detailed figures for unemployment and short time at the Morris factory in the first week of January."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

DEMOCRACY IN FRANCE

SIR,—May I suggest a further explanation of the French attitude to the Communists? It is based upon the belief that there is a definite alliance between the Reich and the U.S.S.R. Nobody would claim liberty of speech and movement in France for self-confessed agents of Hitler—why should greater indulgence be shown to the self-confessed agents of his ally? The genuine Communist desires the defeat of France by Germany in the hope that the resulting misery would effect a Communist revolution in France. But only a tiny minority of those who voted Communist at the last elections share this view. Ever since the Revolution the French have been in the habit of sacrificing liberty in wartime; and while the suppression of any minority opinion at any time is disliked by English Liberals like myself, the Communists cannot logically complain, since in their ideal state, Russia, liberty of speech and person is denied even in peacetime to all opponents of the Government. RAYMOND MORTIMER

SIR,—In his survey of the French political scene, your Paris correspondent G. L. reports that German, Austrian, Czech, Italian and Spanish refugees have been placed in concentration camps by the French authorities.

From letters I have received from France I can assure you that the German prisoners concerned are genuine anti-Nazis, most of whom have had to leave their country on account of their anti-Nazi activity. It is difficult to think that they have been interned because of their beliefs and convictions, but in the absence of any specific charge, this appears to be the only explanation possible.

May I be allowed to quote a few passages from letters describing the conditions under which they are now living:

> We have neither chairs, tables nor any light in the barracks. There are no means of heating. We are one hundred persons in one room, and we are plagued by all kinds of insects. On rainy days, we have no possibility of drying our clothes. When we arrived, the barracks were in a terrible state, there were huge cracks in the wooden walls. In the meantime, we have managed to improve this a bit. . . .
>
> There are a hundred women of every nationality in this camp, among them the wife of Max Maddelena, former member of the German Reichstag, who has been sentenced to life imprisonment by the Nazis, as well as the wife of Mr. Muth who was beaten to death by the Nazis in Wupperthal. . . .
>
> There are about 300 political and other refugees here of every section of society and profession, from the worker to the professor. When the refugees were brought to this camp it was in a shocking state. There was no water at all. People had to wash in a small river running nearby which is polluted by several adjacent factories. The refugees took the initiative of repairing the camp as far as possible and constructing a drainage system so as to make it inhabitable for human beings.
>
> According to recent information, the refugees have been told they will have to leave soon as now the camp has been improved it is to be used to lodge German prisoners of war—Nazi aviation officers. . . .

Cannot something be done to relieve the plight of these unhappy men and women? HEINZ KAMNITZER,
139C Finchley Road, N.W.3. Editor, *Inside Nazi Germany*.

COMMUNISM EXPLAINED

SIR,—If there is one thing to-day to which the Socialist Movement of Great Britain and the Socialist Movement of the world attaches importance it is freedom of thought and freedom of expression.

The other day, we sent to the *Daily Worker* an advertisement of the new issue of *Plebs*. The advertisement read—Where Stands Russia To-day? A Debate between Upton Sinclair, the famous Socialist Novelist, and Professor Sidney Hook. The *Daily Worker* refuses to insert the advertisement.

In this country the *Daily Worker* is the champion of what it would describe as the greatest democracy in the world—Russia. The first right that democracy has is freedom of opinion. Are we to take it from the action of the *Daily Worker*—and this is not the first time it has refused to accept advertisements of Socialist journals because it objected to the contents—that all the talk about democracy is so much humbug, or is the Communist conception of democracy summed up in the idea that workers are entitled to express their opinions only on condition that they are acceptable to the controllers of the Communist Party?

N.C.L.C., J. P. M. MILLAR,
15 South Hill Park Gardens, Editor, *Plebs*
London, N.W.3.

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Leonard Whittall, may I be allowed to state that (1) the heading to my letter, "Communism Explained," was not mine; (2) the letter in question was written before the outbreak of war in Finland and had no reference to that war?

On the subject of Finland I am in agreement with Soviet policy for reasons sufficiently stated by Mr. Benn and others of your correspondents.

The rest of Mr. Whittall's letter uses the well-worn device of applying a general principle in total disregard of concrete situations and practical possibilities. I fully agree that the writings of Marx and Lenin, who were above all things dialectical realists, will not be found to contain anything so silly. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

14 Stourwood Road, Bournemouth.

[We selected Mr. Robertson's letter out of many letters which supported the Communist case because it was brief, clear and direct. —ED., *N.S.&N.*]

WAR AIMS

SIR,—Many Liberals and Labourites, like the Tories, are demanding the complete defeat of Germany and the destruction of "Hitlerism." Such a result will be extremely expensive in blood and money to achieve, and it would earn us the undying hatred of the German people. Also the collapse of their central government, together with the starvation of their people by the blockade, will be the ideal Marxian recipe for revolution and the only possible result would be a communist revolution in Germany.

In that case the only Federation of Europe that would be possible would be a Fascist alliance against the communist States, and a preparation for the real Armageddon in a few years' time, in which the western and southern fringes of Europe would be opposed to the solid centre and east, and being on the side of

reaction and divided by class conflicts, they would inevitably be defeated.

All those who are not so blinded by class prejudice as to expect a "Right revolution" in Germany, should realise that the only way to avoid disaster is to admit that the Allies, through their past mistakes, have been to some extent responsible for the war, and to offer Germany a just peace without a fight to the finish. It must be recognised that the complete restoration of Poland or Czechoslovakia is impossible, if only because communism would come first, and also that the internal regime of Germany is her own affair.

Therefore we should offer Germany peace on some such terms as the following:

(1) Autonomy under the German Reich for Poland and Czechoslovakia, with free port facilities for each of them and their own Customs, if they desired them.

(2) Guarantees against future aggression, by the abolition of offensive arms, such as bombing planes, tanks and heavy guns, while ensuring the ability of self-defence, and therefore of self-respect, of all nations by allowing defensive arms, such as anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, light guns and machine guns. (The Finns have shown us what can be done by even a small nation in its own defence.)

(3) Complete equality under the League of Nations for all member States in colonial trade, investment and administration, including the colonies of the present neutral nations. (The neutral States should be willing to pool their colonies under the League so as to avoid the loss and danger to them of future wars.)

It is only on such a basis of a peace founded on justice that an effective League or Federation of Nations can be formed. We should publish our terms and leave them open for Germany to accept whenever she wants to do so. WRAM

BLEST PAIR. . . .

SIR,—In a review "Blest Pair" of M. Blanche's *More Portraits of a Lifetime* and my *Since Fifty* the following words occur in the last paragraph but one: "But Roger Fry and Desmond Shawe-Taylor were not impressed." I am not concerned with Mr. Shawe-Taylor, who seems to have commented on M. Blanche's book, but I am with Roger Fry's opinion of my place as an artist.

In justice to me and for the credit of the impartiality of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION I challenge the Editor to reprint, or to quote from two articles written by Fry in *The Nation*, on June 11th, 1910, and on June 10th, 1911. WM. ROTHENSTEIN

The Athenaeum, Pall Mall, S.W.1.

[Mr. Clive Bell replies: "I did not say, nor would I dream of saying, that Roger Fry never respected the painting of Sir William Rothenstein. On the contrary, having discussed the matter with him more than once, I know that he respected the sincerity and industry shown in Sir William's earlier work, and found something to say in favour of his pictures to the very end of his life. Also, I feel sure it will give pleasure to Sir William and to Dr. MacColl to know that the latter mistook when, in a recent review, he asserted that Fry, about the year 1912, suddenly and for no very creditable reason, turned against Rothenstein. This, as I know from many conversations, was not the case. But if Sir William will read my review again, and read it rather more carefully, he will see that what I said was that Roger Fry was not impressed by his honours and social advantages." ED., *N.S.&N.*]

SIR,—I pray you, ingeminate Peace upon that perturbèd, perturgid spirit, your Mr. Bell. Impossible to "cast aspersions on" his "critical integrity," since it does not exist. What genuinely burns in him is a fractional gusto, largely uxorious. He has occasion; witness a still-life by Mrs. Bell at the Academy, but were there no such justification that constancy of praise would do credit to his heart. What more concerns and puzzles me is his head, or rather his complacency about its condition, nay, status of HIGHBROW ("Blest Pair . . ." and *passim*). Too many of us are subject, under the scythe of stealing Time, to that regression or, more topically for him, Bloomsburial of golden and ebon locks, regarding it as a minor affliction. Not so Mr. Bell.

At an American dinner two weary guests discussed an interminable Orator-in-chief. "Does he claim to be a Lawyer?" asked one. "No, he *admits* it," replied the other. Mr. Bell does not admit; he claims, he boasts, he *brags*. Why, I wonder, Why? Does he yearn to be one with the Poet Buchanan, who wrote *Balder the Beautiful?*

With your second blest Siren, Mr. Mortimer, I dare no longer dally, but he must not suppose that I deny the presence at your cosy board of strays from Blackouterdom. Sickert, of course, at the high table. When was my greatly gifted, engagingly cynical contemporary absent from any coterie, whether of the Elderly Mild or Young Ferocious? Among those welcome to the "and Pictures" buffet I rejoice to see Rodrigo Moyniham because, having started cheekily with colour-splashes at Zwemmer's, he has worked from slop to painting, so that a "Ham" of his is on the track of a dish that Manet raised to the heaven of paint. Duncan Grant's indubitable talent has moved in reverse, and I note that on Mr. Mortimer's thermometer he has dropped from "best since Constable" to "probably the most gifted of our living painters." What, then, of Steer?

I will add a seventh to Mr. Mortimer's meagre roll, the late Mark Gertler, whom he singled out for high praise in a notice of Contemporary Art Society acquisitions. Before that purchase, due to the aberrant taste of Mr. Maynard Keynes, I was assured by a dealer "We regard him as a *very serious* artist." Now among "serious" painters, i.e., those "We" name with a hush in the voice, Gertler was easily the worst of his generation in drawing, colour and pigment. Fry, however, had given him a licence.

Cézanne, honest man, has indeed a "world-wide" vogue among collectors, except, I believe, in France; but why be bullied by Totalitarian fashion, seeing what prices we pay for an ovine docility? D. S. MACCOLL

1 Hampstead Way,
N.W.11.

IRISH GUNPOWDER

SIR,—The article by R. M. Fox, "Irish Gunpowder," needs some amendment or amplification if English readers are not to form a false impression of conditions now obtaining in Eire. Mr. Fox described what he observed on a day when vehicles and individuals entering Dublin were searched by soldiers; it is not his fault that by the time his article appeared in print these searches had ceased. He has, however, no excuse for writing "Shops in Dublin were bright with twinkling lights, cinemas blazed with Neon pencillings. Eire was a peace zone. All that has changed now."

If this means anything it must mean that as a result of the raid on the Magazine Fort, Dublin lighting has been extinguished and Eire is now a war zone. Mr. Fox must surely know that this is not so.

Again his statement, "Now it [Eire] is on a war footing and soldiers are everywhere" will, I am afraid, be interpreted by English people in terms of their own experience; they will conclude that life in Eire is now similar to life in England.

Soldiers are "everywhere" in the sense that they are continuing to search suspected areas throughout the country while before Christmas this did not occur; but they are not patrolling roads or streets, they are not holding up individuals entering or leaving Dublin and the appearance of the city is normal. Since the outbreak of the European War, Eire has been on a war footing in the sense that her government has assumed far reaching powers similar to those of the governments of her belligerent neighbours and has, within the last week, made its power of internment effective; it is true that this is a war measure consequent upon the raid. But it is equally true that these enormous powers do not, *as yet*, affect the life of the ordinary citizen and it would be incorrect and, indeed, absurd to imply that we are living under war conditions. K. ARNOLD PRICE

POLITICAL OBJECTORS

SIR,—Much dissatisfaction is being felt by people interested in the preservation of our democratic rights during the war. At the moment specially concerned are they regarding the treatment meted out to conscientious objectors.

A case in point is that of George Plume, a Hampstead Independent Labour Party member who, as political objector was granted conditional exemption in the London Tribunal last October. The Minister of Labour appealed against this decision, and George Plume lost his case in the Appellate Court. Fenner Brockway, who represented Plume, was refused permission to quote the assurances of the Minister as given in the House of Commons that there would be no differentiation between political and religious objectors.

As this test case is of great concern to future political objectors, we ask all progressive societies and individuals to demand that this flagrant misinterpretation of the Act should stop now.

35 St. Bride Street, W. BEATTIE (Chairman)
London, E.C.4. A. HAMBLEY (Secretary)
Hampstead I.L.P.

Current Literature

REBUS IN ARDUIS

IGNORING the counsel of those who, in the first weeks of war, rushed in to tell us what we had best read, I returned at once to a classic of military life—Alfred de Vigny's *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires*. The form of this book is arresting: it consists of three stories, laced together by the author's meditations on the soldier's life as he had lived it. The idea illustrated by the stories is that war is a machine, in essence anti-human, and that the soldier's greatness and pathos arise from the willing submission to it of his humanity and reason. The statement that war is the continuation of diplomacy by other means may be true, but it slurs over the fact that war is as different from any other kind of violent action—a revolution, for instance—as absolute monarchy is from the constitutional kind.

Vigny was the first poet clearly to state this distinction, which his character peculiarly adapted him to perceive; for his naturally strong romantic feelings were held in iron control by a brilliant, jewel-hard intelligence and an exact sense of responsibility. Hence his cold hatred for all forms of vulgarity, self-deception and mendacity; for all theatrical posturing. Almost alone of his generation he saw straight through the Byron legend and disposed of it in a single, contemptuous sentence:—"*La vie est trop courte pour que nous en perdions une part précieuse à nous contrefaire.*" He had seen too much of both sides of the medal ever to fall into self-dramatisation—that last refuge of those who cannot face the truth about themselves. Whether he is recounting the grief of the naval captain whose duty it was to shoot the young man in whom he had become affectionately interested; or the hideous fate of the adjutant who was guarding the powder-magazine of Vincennes on the night of the great explosion; or the grandeur of "La Canne de Jonc" who gave his life to a child in return for that of one he had killed: in all it is the tragedy of the Unjust Necessity he is celebrating. This is the clue to the character of the real soldier. The inexorable sadness of the military face (look, for instance, at a close-up of General Gamelin) proceeds from the knowledge that, in war, fraternity, good will and justice do not suffice. When sticking point comes, the military machine must surpass the human will, if the day is to be won. The untenable position must somehow be held, the limbs move when no more strength is left in them, the gun be fired when the ammunition is exhausted. "*Il faut toujours exiger des hommes plus qu'ils ne peuvent faire, afin d'en avoir tout ce qu'ils peuvent faire*," noted Vigny in his journal. So the rule must be supreme and justice fly out at the shell-shattered window. So the sentry who gives way to sleep after four days and nights of vigil must be shot. This is monstrous and everyone knows it: hence that sad, inexorable face and the mild, taciturn cynicism of old soldiers.

Vigny's style is not as simple as it looks, or as cold as it has been said to be. Since it was designed to tell the truth, and does so, it is not rhetorical; but the passionate control produces a rhythm as living as Tolstoy's and the infrequent images, though not of the startling order, are so perfectly in harmony with the style of thought as to provide for the latter a constant succession of just enhancements. The result is to prevent the reader from substituting his own day-dream for the author's reality.

The detail is equally precise and quite merciless:

> Rien n'indiquait que ce pied eût jamais été chaussé. Il était comme embaumé et conservé à la manière des momies; brisé à deux pouces au-dessus de la cheville, comme les pieds de statues en étude dans les ateliers; poli, veiné comme du marbre noir, et n'ayant de rose que les ongles.

Vigny's comments, too, are throughout those of a soldier. Thus, after describing the frightful scene of the explosion, when the adjutant's body appeared as if engraved on the wall, he says that no one present expressed pity, and adds: "*Peut-être parce que le plaindre eût été se prendre soi-même en pitié pour avoir couru le même danger*"—a comment that makes rings in the mind, like a stone dropped into water.

"Canne de Jonc" looks forward to Tolstoy's Prince Andrey, but he has an English predecessor—the old soldier whom Wordsworth met that night on the mountain road, resting in the moonlight, lonelier than the road itself.

> Companionless,
> No dog attending, by no staff sustained,
> He stood, and in his very dress appeared
> A desolation, a simplicity
> To which the trappings of a gaudy world
> Make a strange background. From his lips, ere long,
> Issued low muttered sounds, as if in pain
> Or some uneasy thought; yet still his form
> Kept the same awful steadiness—at his feet
> His shadow lay, and moved not.

But the eye of genius was on him and pierced his secret.

> He all the while was in demeanour calm,
> Concise in answer; solemn and sublime
> He might have seemed, but that in all he said
> There was a strange half-absence, as of one
> Knowing too well the importance of his theme,
> But feeling it no longer.

These, too, are the features of the captain who furnished Vigny with the first story of his book; they have so long been silent because *they know*. The young do not; for war, in imagination, is always conceived on chivalrous, epic lines; its leaden mechanism is thought of as incidental, whereas it is the essence of the business. Thus war persists because it is a legend—because the sense of glory and of danger—"*cette magnifique inquiétude*," as Vigny calls it—is supposed to engulf the surrounding tedium, squalor and dread. In fact it does not do so; but those who return to tell the tale, find that it falls on deaf ears. The legend cannot be exploded for more than two generations; after that it revives.

War cannot change a man's character; it only modifies the intensity of certain of his characteristics. The neurasthenic acquires shell-shock, the feather-head becomes irredeemably frivolous, he in whom the sense of responsibility has lain dormant turns out a leader of men. Only in this sense can war be said occasionally to benefit the individual: it may produce the best, but it may harden the worst, in a man; in no case will it create anything new. And so it is that life is hard on the hero, for 99 per cent. of it gives him no opportunity for the display of his gift. Indeed, if he is not lucky, he may die without anyone's knowing he had it in him at all. And the rest of the time his other traits—those which usually go with a capacity for heroic action—may not be so very endearing. For strength is only sometimes of service, and silence—if you have to live with it—becomes a perpetual, exasperating bore, as many a romantic woman has lived to discover.

> Il n'y a que les malheureux qui se battent bien, ceux à qui la misère de la guerre est plus douce que la misère de la paix.

This is a hard saying and only true if the profoundest sense of the word "unhappy" be understood. At more superficial levels it is certainly the case that those whose lives in peacetime are not unpleasant fight just as well as those to whom war means only the exchange of one kind of hardship for another. But the ultimate recklessness—the ultimate selflessness—of extreme heroism is probably only found in those whose soul is a house divided against itself. The integrated personality is satisfied with less spectacular vindications and has too much to lose to fling all away without a second's hesitation, during which the occasion passes. To act with the whole of oneself is doubtless always the desideratum, but I doubt if it is often possible to attain it in war: the general confusion of thought and feeling is too great. In times of stress people look to Public Opinion for answers to the questions they are asking, instead of to themselves or each other. "What does the Country feel?" they ask, forgetting that *they* are the Country. And the questions get answered, all too readily, by tricky persons behind desks. But to succumb to the spell

of the press is a civilian vice: soldiers know better than to read about what they themselves are doing.

At least one of Vigny's points in *Servitude et Grandeur* is implicit: that what is done under pressure of the Unjust Necessity need not impair the soul. This needs saying again to-day. Nobility of character, generosity, forgiveness, love: these things do not depend on the State—on political systems—on war. They are the privilege neither of the rich nor of the poor. *They are unconquerably private*—anti-Totalitarian. If they were not, misanthropy would not be the poor subterfuge it is and we should all be at the dictators' mercy. It is not the possession of those qualities which make Vigny's soldiers so pathetic and so grand; it is their ability to lay them aside at the call of the monster. That is their laurel crown—the sad knowledge of a necessity peculiar to their estate and one which isolates them; for even in these days of citizen armies, the true soldier is as rare as he was one hundred and twenty years ago; but it is Vigny's distinction to have perceived the nature of his tragedy—his solitude, his horror, his silent face guarding the intolerable necessity. It is a tragedy in which the plaited skein of thought and act has been unravelled, and the threads lie side by side. For the thoughtful, sensitive man who puts his private life away to take up arms, soon abandons elaborate systems of philosophy and learns that wisdom is, after all, an affair of cracker mottoes and nurse's proverbs. Wilfred Owen knew this, and the light of it must occasionally flicker across the marbled mess that is the average young Nazi's *Welt-anschauung*.

The example, again to-day, is set by the French. Thus the anonymous soldier who contributed to the *Spectator* on October 27th last:—

> Je me suis réveillé un matin, à l'aube, dans la paille d'une grange lorraine, soldat de la République Francaise, l'esprit clair et dégagé de préoccupations désormais inutiles, avec le sentiment réconfortant d'une stabilité retrouvée. L'incertitude de la vie militaire a quelque chose de permanent dans quoi on s'installe avec une insouciance bénie, qui forme petit à petit, mais très rapidement, le fond du caractère du soldat et lui permet de ne jamais envisager que le meilleur des sorts et de garder intacte, en toute circonstance, une aveugle confiance en ses chefs et en son étoile personnelle.

That is the voice of Alfred de Vigny, coming to us across a century of peace and war; for, as George Santayana has said: "The truly classical is not foreign to anybody. It is precisely that part of tradition and art which does not alienate us from our own life or from nature, but reveals them in all their depth and nakedness, freed from the fashions and hypocrisies of time and place."

Servitude et Grandeur Militaires is a classical book, for the terrible griefs and exaltations of its characters are seen as though from a great way off, from the marmoreal repose of an achieved perspective. No writer's tone—not Emerson's, not Matthew Arnold's—was ever higher than Vigny's, in this uniquely beautiful book. Here speaks the voice of a completely distinguished nature, of a man who had learnt that few things are really worth saying, but that what must be said had better be said like this. EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

A LIFE WORTH LIVING

Testament of Friendship. By VERA BRITTAIN. *Macmillan.* 10s. 6d.

Like *Testament of Youth*, *Testament of Friendship* is a difficult book to describe. Miss Brittain, in spite of the clotted, adjectival redundancy of her style, has a remarkable power of self-expression. Whatever she writes throbs with intense feelings of tragedy and frustration, and comes to the reader like a sacrifice on the altar of self-pity. You may dislike such public offerings of the intimate details of the heart; you may doubt whether life can really be such a poignant affair all the time; you may even, with a superior air, pooh-pooh such extravagant femininity; but you will not, unless you are very hard-boiled, leave Miss Brittain's book unfinished; and when you look back on it, whatever prejudices she has offended, you will be forced to admit that, though she sometimes uses clumsy tools, she has built a solid structure and made thousands of people think about Winifred Holtby, for whom *South Riding* is the vague memory of a pleasant film.

And yet Miss Brittain has failed to write a biography. By itself, the fact that the title she has chosen links this book with her own autobiography, indicates that it is less a life of Miss Holtby than a memorial to her own love. Someone less violently distressed by Miss Holtby's early death might have given us a more solid, objective portrait of the many-sided, brilliant woman who was equally at home in politics, literature, the girls' school and the farms of Yorkshire. The very depth of her feeling made this impossible for Miss Brittain; and as a result, it is not Miss Holtby who is the centre of this study, but Miss Brittain herself. We see her friend solely through Miss Brittain's eyes, and it is a sign of the friend's strength of personality that, in spite of this treatment, the reader gets an impression, through the mist of tears, of a real and vital character.

Winifred Holtby was fortunate in her home and in the epoch of her birth. The daughter of a prosperous Yorkshire farmer, she went to an excellent girls' school at Scarborough where she already showed her journalistic talent in a description of the German bombardment. (Untutored by Sir John Anderson, the headmistress selected a route-march as the safest sort of A.R.P.) Then followed a year's nursing in London, a desolatory first year at wartime Oxford and finally a short and intensely enjoyed period behind the front in France, before she returned to Oxford to read History. When Miss Brittain first met her, Miss Holtby was an enormously vital, romantic, unscholarly, quick-witted undergraduate, revelling in the hybrid world of post-war Oxford, and already, what she was to remain all her life, the confidante of everyone's worries, the devoted defender of the lame dog in politics and in private life.

Two more contrasting personalities cannot be conceived. Miss Brittain, shy, lacking in self-confidence, scarred by her war experiences: Miss Holtby, warm-hearted, untouched by the war, instantly popular wherever she went. But each found in the other what she lacked herself; and both, in very different ways, were determined to live the life of the independent woman and the writer. It was Winifred Holtby's good fortune that she grew up just at the time when this was first possible; and the abiding interest of her short life is that she was the first and the most distinguished of the new generation who could enjoy the equality of the sexes, instead of fighting for it. Whereas Miss

'I have learnt more from it than from any other book about the arctic.'
PETER FREUCHEN

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JONATHAN CAPE

Brittain remains a feminist, Winifred Holtby was a superbly free woman—free from the inhibitions both of Puritanism and of free love. She fell in love at seventeen, and this love affair lasted till she died. But she treated it with a common sense and self-understanding, which displayed a beautiful poise even in its unsatisfied dependence.

It must have been this graciousness, combined with an intense pleasure in life and a passion for justice, which made her so impressive a person. At a time when most intellectuals were obviously "kinked" in some way or another, she became a real person, so unafraid of her feelings that she could give friendship without stint and without being devoured by her hungry admirers. She lived intensely but not violently, and she enjoyed life so naturally that she was never greedy to snatch it. No wonder that when she had disciplined her style, she became a first-rate journalist and lecturer, and a noteworthy writer of novels.

It was, as Miss Brittain notes, her lecture-tour in South Africa which first showed her what was to be the direction of her life. Before this, she had been a charming girl with literary aspirations: on her return to a directorship of *Time and Tide* she was a woman with a purpose, and throughout her life the struggle for native rights remained a constant of her philosophy, even in fields far removed from African problems. It gave content to her novels, too, saving her from that lush romanticism which was always the danger of her exuberant vitality, and inspiring her most consistent piece of writing, *Mandoa! Mandoa!*

Miss Brittain represents her as constantly torn between her social and artistic conscience. But I suspect that in this interpretation she has unconsciously attributed to her friend her own problems and ambitions. For it is precisely the social content of Winifred Holtby's writing which gives to it its enduring value. She could never have been a "pure artist," and, had she written for eternity, she would not have got beyond her rather sentimental poems. When Miss Brittain writes:

> The tragedy of journalism lies in its impermanence; the very topicality which gives it brilliance condemns it to an early death. Too often it is a process of flinging bright balloons in the path of a hurricane, a casting of priceless petals upon the rushing surface of a stream.

and when in a concluding passage she laments:

> The artist must be jealous and fierce for himself and we, if we are wise, will be jealous and fierce on his behalf . . . .
>
> The enormous, unlimited selfishness of mankind, so pitiless and yet so pitiable in its ruthless blindness, has always extinguished much noble work that should have been cherished in the treasure-house of literature, music and art. But it has deprived itself of few things better worth having than Winifred Holtby's unwritten books.

she describes her own sense of personal loss but loses sight of the fact that a Winifred Holtby jealously and fiercely guarded from the world would have been an unhappy person and a lifeless writer. Winifred Holtby formed a humbler estimate of her literary powers. In a letter, she wrote:

> I have no illusions about my work. I am primarily a useful, versatile, sensible and fairly careful artisan. I have trained myself to write quickly, punctually and readably to order over a wide range of subjects. That has nothing to do with art. It has quite a lot to do with politics. I am primarily a publicist. At odd moments I write works of the imagination—stories, satires, poems, plays. They are very uneven in quality. They have moments of virtue. But I feel that a pedestrian gift like mine must apply itself to quantity, because quality is a gift of the gods which is only rarely given.

Of course, this piece of self-depreciation was not the whole truth, but it was a great deal nearer the truth than the adulation which Miss Brittain heaps on the memory of her friend. In all probability her journalism, her novels and her public activities were of more enduring value than if she had set herself down in an ivory tower to compose a series of masterpieces. For a personality as complete as hers can rarely devote itself to pure art, though it may sometimes aspire to do so. "Pure" artists are nearly always failures in personal life, and the few who are lucky enough to write pleasantly and live happily should not be lamented because they did not devote themselves to literature, or spare themselves in helping friends and causes.

In 1931 Winifred Holtby, exhausted by an over-full and happy life, had a breakdown from which she never recovered. *Testament of Friendship* describes how she bore those years of illness and gained from them a new serenity of temper. She died in 1935. I fancy that if she had been able to choose between a long life of seclusion and her 37 years of intense living, she would not have chosen seclusion. Parsimony, even for the sake of art, was not her way.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

NEW NOVELS

The Fall. By HUGH KINGSMILL. *Methuen.* 8*s.* 3*d.*
The Boon Companions. By HUGH MCGRAW. *Heinemann.* 8*s.* 3*d.*
Miss Lavington. By R. H. MOTTRAM. *Hutchinson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The Romantic. By ELIZABETH BIBESCO. *Heinemann.* 8*s.* 3*d.*

The publishers' decision to revise the standard price of novels may be the writing on the wall for several important branches of contemporary fiction. The seven-and-sixpenny book will, no doubt, manage to bear the extra ninepence, but most of the eight-and-sixpences—the élite of the lending libraries—will probably be unable to find an adequate public at half a guinea, and be faced with the alternatives of compression or ruin. On the whole this should do a great deal of good. The Victorian triple-decker was abominably prolix, and its minute descriptions of personal appearance and historical background choked vivid characterisation as surely as its lengthy scenic description stifled the subtler suggestion of atmosphere that was so noticeable in the Edwardian novel. In the end, rising costs of production—and, perhaps, the increasing business of the middle classes—shortened the popular novel very considerably, and it is possible to argue that the characteristic concision of Maugham or Forster owes its beginning partly to commercial necessity. Since the late twenties, however, novels have again increased in length. Complex and unessential sub-plots have returned to fashion, and where the nineteenth-century writer devoted pages to his hero's clothes and lineage, his modern successor describes in remorseless detail each of his most insignificant activities. Now, however, books will have to be shorter, and most writers, faced with an inescapable choice, will have to sacrifice the detail to the essential of their story. The poet and the dramatist are forced to be concise by the exigencies of the medium in which they work; it will be among the few benefits of the present war if it compels novelists to do likewise.

In the above respects *The Fall* is a model, perhaps a portent, of what the novel may have to become. It is lucid in thought, incisive in presentation, and austere in style; there is almost no description, no deviation from the central theme, and a dialogue as compressed and adequate as a good heroic couplet. Mr. Kingsmill's lush peers may regard his book as but the dry bones of a story; actually, it is an articulated skeleton, and the imposition of flesh and blood might merely have detracted from its ironical completeness. *The Fall* is a shorthand reminiscence of a slightly dreary minor tragedy. William, a middle-aged, unsuccessful writer, is slowly driven into desperation by his wife, an appalling, pathetic creature who pesters her husband to prolong the endearments of adolescence, and is driven by jealous suspicions ceaselessly to demand from him ridiculous vows of fidelity. At last boredom and irritation overcome his habits of affection and he leaves her to pursue Ruth, a young woman whose talk of passionate internal conflict conceals a sure eye for her own self-interest. Ruth proves unobtainable, William loses his job, suffers an accident and finally gets a divorce in circumstances so grotesque that I feel they must be founded on fact. At the end of the book William is at last free from his emotional entanglements, but one knows that he will remain a failure, for in spite of his talents he is incurably weak and the true cause of all his own misfortunes. He is, if you like, the hero ruined by his one weakness—except that he is not a hero and his weakness is an all-pervading accidie. In writing such a novel Mr. Kingsmill has shown considerable courage, for its style and treatment are such that some readers will certainly regard it as an autobiography of almost embarrassing honesty. If William's wife insists that he repeat "Good night, darling, darling, darling wife" three times before she lets him go to sleep and makes him swear to commit suicide should she die before him, he meekly does as she tells him and tries feebly to be unfaithful to her; if Ruth emerges as a pretentious prig, he behaves like a silly schoolboy. There is no attempt to justify William, and had his story claimed to be autobiographical it might well have won a lasting reputation. As a novel, *The Fall* is not without faults. At times the compression is carried too far and degenerates almost into parody; sometimes the haphazard construction becomes so tiring that one would welcome a little orderly padding. Nevertheless, Mr. Kingsmill has written a striking, unusual and highly readable story that deserves, even more than did his previous books, a wider success than it will probably receive. It will prove, I am afraid, too depressing for the ordinary reader, especially at a time when verisimilitude is

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IN THE STEPS OF LAWRENCE OF ARABIA *by* **Douglas Glen.** 8s. 6d.

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more than ever unwelcome. It does almost everything a good novel is supposed to do, except provide an escape.

The Boon Companions is amusing middle-class picaresque in the unfamiliar setting of a shady suburban engineering works. The plot is concerned mainly with a nice young fellow's abortive efforts to dispose of a promising invention, and the unfortunate contacts that occur between his glacial fiancée and his rackety gang of acquaintances. After a series of minor but cumulative misfortunes, he gets the sack, meets with an accident, but at last finds hope for the future. This conventional, conventionally treated, story is saved from boredom by the freshness of its character and incident. Its background is the unsung Bohemia of the suburbs, the world of saloon-bars, palm courts and semi-illegal drinking clubs, the world of those shoddy but still colourful misfits "who crawl from pub to pub about the town And in each bar the last bar's sorrows drown." The inhabitants of this mild inferno—the fussy works manager, the dishonest foreman, the drunken technician and the rest—are by no means original figures, but gain a telling if spurious vitality by appearing in an unfamiliar costume. Too few writers realise the value of a change of scene, and forget that the clichés of one environment are the originalities of another. Almost everyone enjoys information, and the principal difference between journalism and the ordinary novel is that one recounts isolated incidents and the other a whole way of life. In both arts facts, real or imaginary, have the widest appeal, and the novelist who can draw convincing pictures of alien sections of society is as sure of success as is a competent feature-writer. Mr. McGraw covers ground unknown to most of the reading public, and although he has no great pretensions, writes with skill and economy. His novel, in fact, aims low and hits the mark, which is better than aiming high and missing altogether.

It is symbolic that *Miss Lavington* should be sold at the old price, for it belongs very definitely to the old tradition. One's first reaction is to ask a number of questions. Do silver-haired, sophisticated, successful headmistresses remember their first kiss (no more) so vividly that thirty years later they faint at the sight of the kisser's son? Do their cultured, competent nieces take an embrace in a parked car from a mildly oafish estate agent as a proposal of marriage? If they did so, would the estate agent regard it as perfectly natural and immediately concur? Has the author of the *Spanish Farm* really devoted a whole novel to nothing more than this? Unhappily, this is precisely what Mr. Mottram has done, and his story of Miss Lavington's sentimental return to her country birthplace has very little more to offer. The descriptive passages are lucid and gentle, Miss Lavington's reminiscences are pleasantly nostalgic, and the niece's *affaire* is treated with what some will call tender delicacy and others commonplace insipidity. Mr. Mottram writes with a mellow grace that makes him easy to read even though he persists in recording each slight incident from the viewpoint of several persons in turn, while his sentences have a leisurely polish well suited to the world they describe. But however one praises its form, the content of the story is little less than futile. One can only regret that so practised a technique is accompanied by so little inspiration.

"Do as little Jack Horner did," says the blurb of *The Romantic* coyly, "put your thumb into this pie: you will not fail to pull out a plum. For it is full of the plums of epigram, the raisins of wisdom and the almonds of wit." Pies, however, contain other ingredients, and Princess Bibesco has so garnished hers with puff pastry, not to mention suet, that I was quite unable to swallow it. Lisa ("'I am so happy,' she thought disconsolately") had married Stanislaus, a perverted Prince ("All his mistresses were coloured balls floating in the air"), but "had realised on her honeymoon that she was married to a vivisectionist," and when he died found Sir Cuthbert Musgrave, with Ulysses his retriever and Leander his spaniel, such a relief that she proved her love for him by having a child by Serge, another Prince who talks of nothing but his interest in birches. Lisa dies in the end because she has stumbled on a profound, disintegrating absolute. *Slice of Pie.* Plum: "Expecting a child, a woman's face becomes stationary, moored to the unknown." Raisin: "A current is a dream tugging at a river." Almond: "'Great events cast their shadows before them!' 'Or their lights!'" I don't think one wants a second helping.

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OURSELVES, PAST AND PRESENT

Modern Man in the Making. By OTTO NEURATH. *Secker and Warburg.* 16*s.*

Some people like graphs and charts; some prefer pictures conveying the same information; and some would sooner have the "straight" statistics, without frills. In the days when I was teaching W.E.A. classes, I used to find that, if I put charts or pictures conveying statistical information up before a group of students, about half of them woke up and took much more notice than they would have taken of the plain figures, while the other half were simply bored. I think people are like that: some of them prefer a visual appeal, while others can make nothing of it. For those who are "visualisers," in this sense, Dr. Otto Neurath has performed a very big service. He was by no means the inventor of the pictorial chart or diagram; but he was, to the best of my belief, the first person to work out for it a standard notation, and to pay proper attention to making his pictures look pretty as well as convey information. Since Dr. Neurath began his work in Vienna nearly a generation ago he has had many imitators; but his "isotypes" still hold the field.

In this book he has on the whole put his method to excellent use. "Modern" man is not a creature whose birth can be dated; and Dr. Neurath, in tracing his development, has to go back sometimes as far as the Ancient World, and sometimes only to the eighteenth or even the nineteenth century. What he does is to present in pictorial form the main tendencies which are working themselves out in the social life of mankind to-day—with its contrasts of good and evil, of victories of science over natural forces, and of men's social failure to control the new powers which they have conjured up. On the whole, the picture is optimistic; for it shows above all else the fall in mortality rates, the rise in the standard of living, the improvement of transport and communications, and the widening range of experience open to men in the modern world. But on the other side of the account are set down such debit items as the failure to control unemployment, or to make full use of the available powers of production, the alarming shift in the age distribution of populations in the more advanced countries, and, in a series of diagrams representing the balance of war potential, the persistence of warfare and the new powers of devastation conferred upon the warriors by the advance of science.

It is impossible, without reproducing Dr. Neurath's illustrations, to convey an impression of the skill with which his data are marshalled. There is, for example, an extraordinarily interesting diagram entitled "Four Generations of a Family," in which the history of a particular family is traced from the seventeenth century to the present day so as to show the effects of falling mortality rates on the overlapping of generations; and there is another illustrating in a series of wheels the movement towards decentralisation of the modern town. These examples, culled almost at random, can, however, give no adequate idea of the fertility of Dr. Neurath's invention in devising ways of effectively presenting and comparing data relevant to almost every aspect of the social life of "modern" man.

My chief criticism of the book is that Dr. Neurath gives too few actual figures, and is much too general in his indication of sources, so that it is impossible either to check the validity of some of his charts, or to use them as a basis for quotation in terms of actual magnitudes. As the book is most likely to be useful to teachers who will wish to treat it as a source-book for making picture-charts of their own to illustrate points arising in the course of their teaching, these omissions are unfortunate. There are, indeed, certain notes at the end giving references for some of the pictures, but these are inadequate and often unsatisfying. Moreover, the letterpress is scanty in relation to the wealth of the pictorial data.

G. D. H. COLE

A CATHOLIC ON THE JEWS

Anti-Semitism. By JACQUES MARITAIN. *Geoffrey Bles.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

This book is far more than an attack on anti-semitism made by a great humanitarian. It is an analysis and denunciation of the persecuting and destructive tendencies of the totalitarian states, and a defence of the religious role of the Jews in the world, by one of the leading Catholic thinkers of our time.

It is divided into three sections, which were originally delivered as lectures. The first section deals with the Nazi racist argument against the Jews. M. Maritain, of course, easily disposes of the argument that there is any more a consistently Jewish than a consistently Nordic biologically pure race. But the Jews are a community within the community, and it is here that he criticises in the German Jews a tendency to rush too eagerly into the competition of adventurous post-war capitalist Germany, so that "an unprecedented tempest of hate has suddenly risen against the Jews, not because they remained aloof but, on the contrary, because they became assimilated, substantially assimilated, to the German community to the extent of playing a major role in German culture and literature as such, and of sometimes forgetting their Jewish race and the woes of Israel."

This argument leads him further than the Jews, for he criticises both Jews and Christians for replying to persecution by claiming that they are guiltless in the eyes of the society which persecutes them, according to its own standards. Jews and Catholics both try to be good Front-line soldier Germans, instead of turning back "to that impulse of the heart which penetrates to the secret roots of history, that resurrection of spiritual forces in the face of which persecutors cannot stand."

In the second, and by far the most interesting lecture, he outlines a view of Israel which, although mystical in a religious sense, is also true in a social one. Socially it is an interpretation of the legend of the Wandering Jew. The theory is that the Jews are perpetually in search of a Messiah. Religiously Jewry therefore moves parallel, in an opposite direction to Christianity, which claims to have found the Messiah. The Church is a "mysterious body in which living bonds, in order to accomplish a divine task, unite souls with one another, and with God." Israel, on the other hand, "is bound to the world, prisoner and victim of that world which it loves, but *of which* it is not, shall not be, and never can be."

From this point of view Jewry can be regarded as an essential function in a world-picture of Christianity in which its whole history exists contemporaneously. This is a mystical and poetic view of an important contemporary problem, but it has also important social implications. "Israel is assigned . . . a task of *earthly activisation* of the mass of the world. Israel . . . is to be found at the very heart of the world's structure, stimulating it, exasperating it, moving it. . . . It stimulates the movement of history." This view is borne out by the great disasters of

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apathy into which nations which have persecuted and driven out their Jews have sometimes fallen.

His view of the Jews as religious leaven makes M. Maritain as severe a critic of the communist persecution of their religion as of the German persecution of the Jews themselves. Whether one agrees with him or not, this book makes one think; it is often wise, and it contains a poetic vision of our society which is also extremely realistic. It ends with a fine denunciation of the false use of terminology which is one of the most uncivilising weapons of the totalitatian states. "Nowadays, for political ends, there is a remarkable abuse of names still dear to us, names in which even the most crushed of men places hope. In some countries people 'buy Christian' in order to boycott the Jewish merchant." It is not only the word "Christian" that has been abused by political parties, but also, as we now see, terms like "democracy" and "peace" and "non-aggression." It is because he is committed to a civilisation in which words retain their meanings, that the writer must surely stand aside from such barbarous power-politics.

STEPHEN SPENDER

ADVENTURES

Those Wild West Indies. By EDMUND S. WHITMAN. *Jarrolds.* 16*s.*

Limpopo Journey. By CAREL BIRKBY. *Frederick Muller.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Land Below the Wind. By AGNES KEITH. *Michael Joseph.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Of Mr. Edmund S. Whitman we read that "after a career tormenting apoplectic colonels in American army posts all over the world, he passed through M.I.T. and flagged a banana boat for Honduras." To say that his style is breezy is putting it mildly; he positively blows a hurricane. He would scorn to write simply on a printed page. "Horsing around with the babes," "Out and out belly-achers," "His big body enclosed in nothing but a suit of B.V.D's"—these are some of his milder circumlocutions, and unless one is familiar with his idiom it is not easy to distinguish fact from figure. "Lee was a man of few words; when the agreement was reached he climbed into the cab, took his highball from the brakeman dangling from the caboose, and he was off." But he did not spend all his fifteen years in the Caribbean in "horsing around." He was interested in everything from crabs to archaeology, and many fascinating facts and observations brush us by in our progress through his too-lively pages. And when he is really stirred, as by a tropical storm or a fire on a banana plantation, he no longer dangles his words before us like frenzied puppets, but uses them with force and even beauty. His evocation of the ruined majesty of Henri Christophes's citadel is quite moving. There are some good photographic illustrations.

Carel Birkby is a much less noisy writer and a much better one. He is a Cape journalist who has already written three books of unusual African travel. He has adventure in his bones, he has imagination and experience, and with his Zulu boy, Joshua Titus, he sets off as casually on what is evidently a very stiff and partly untracked journey as one might plan overnight a tour in Wales. He is very familiar with all the histories and memoirs of the heroes and adventurers who have thrown away their lives in South Africa, where the whites were only the latest of many invaders. His exploration of the subterranean world of lakes and rivers on the borders of the Kalahari desert, his visit to Old Malaboch, the last native chief to resist white rule in Africa, and to the pre-historic burial mound of Bambanyalo, his discussion of the wanderings of the Black Jews and of the Bavenda rain-makers, their rites and offerings, and two unusually vivid descriptions of dances and musical instruments—these are among numerous good things in his book. And there are some fascinating portraits of eccentric gamekeepers in the Kruger National Park, before the days when 50,000 tourists left luxury cruisers to go and look at the lions. One of them was in the habit of sleeping under a pack of twenty-five huge dogs. "They keep me much warmer than blankets," he explained. I like, too, the picture of the old German woman who wandered up and down the Limpopo river looking for diamonds, and who trekked a hundred miles down to Pietersburg, accompanied only by her pet crane, who flew and walked beside her all the way. There are many charming photographs.

Agnes Keith, whose *Land Below the Wind* was awarded a 5,000 dollar prize by an American publisher as the most interesting and distinctive work of non-fiction submitted in 1939, was married to a British official in Borneo, and in this pleasantly written and frankly personal book she describes her life at a British station, and gives a witty and vivid account of an exciting and uncomfortable journey into the interior. Those who thrive on hardships, she says, are like lions, exultantly licking their wounds back to health again. "Compared to them, I have only the lamb's place in adventure, which is in the stomach of the lion." There are some amusing impressions of British Empire builders seen through American eyes, but the chief charm of the book is her intimate picture of her relations with the native servants, in whose lives she took the most affectionate interest. And perhaps the best sentence in the book is from the lips of an aborigine of North Borneo who was taken to America. "So we entered into America and went to a very great village with a thousand thousand lights. It was night when we arrived, but when I looked up at the sky above this village it was very bright and red and sparkling and there was light everywhere. And I said, 'Is this morning?' And they said, 'No, this is New York!'"

BERYL DE ZOETE

Studies in the Theory of Money and Capital. By ERIK LINDAHL. *Allen and Unwin.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Until the shadow of war crept over her iron-mines, Sweden was reckoned almost an economic paradise. Unemployment had been kept down, partly at least owing to skilful monetary and fiscal devices. This policy had been inspired to a great extent by the Swedish or Stockholm school of economists, and of this school the two most eminent members are Professor Myrdal, whose *Monetary Equilibrium* was recently translated (Hodge, 12*s.* 6*d.*), and Professor Lindahl. Professor Lindahl's book (for experts only) is rather unusual in structure. Part I is new. It contains very interesting and original ideas, mostly on the methods of analysing disequilibrium. Parts II and III, classics of their kind on monetary and on capital theory, which date from 1929, were previously available only in Swedish. Of most general interest perhaps is the appendix on "The Problem of Balancing the Budget," which discusses the plan of deficits in the slump, balanced by surpluses in the boom. This plan has been followed by recent Swedish governments with impressive effect.

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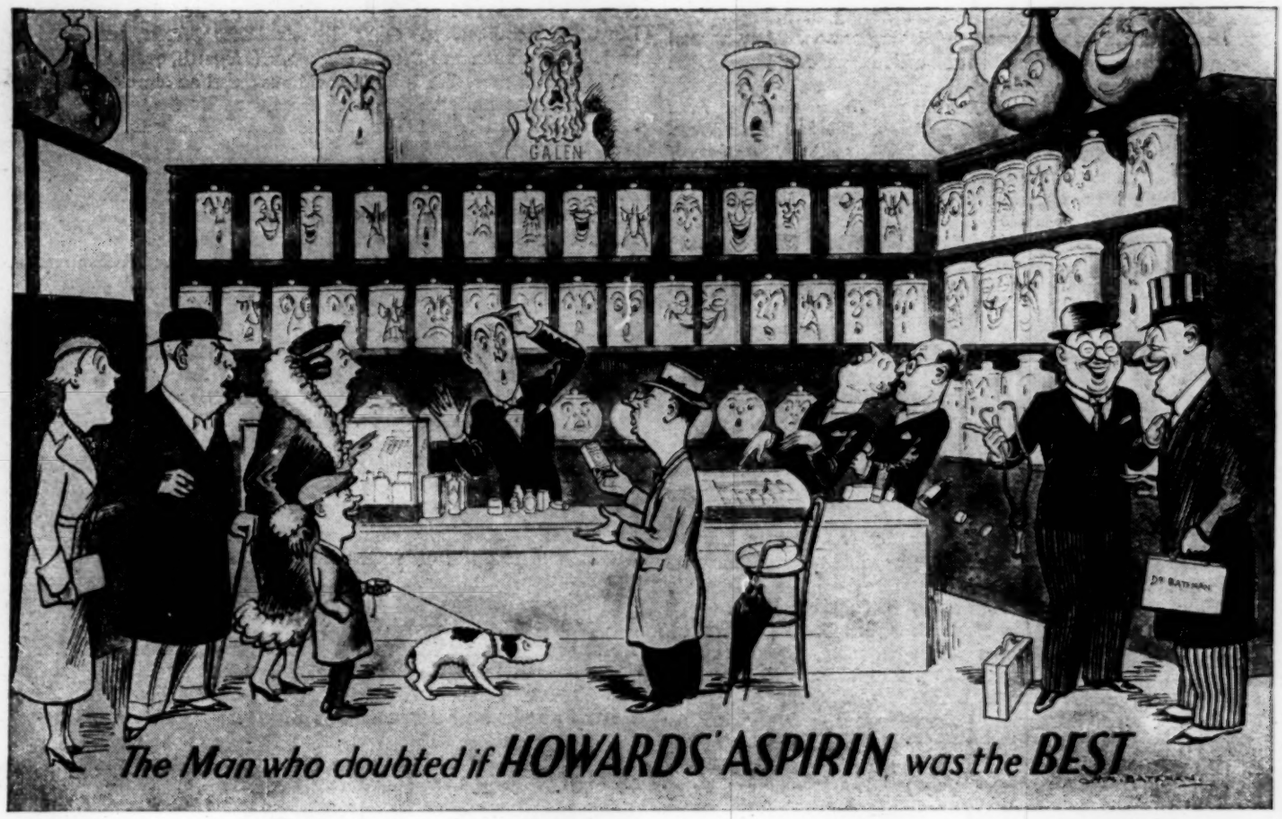

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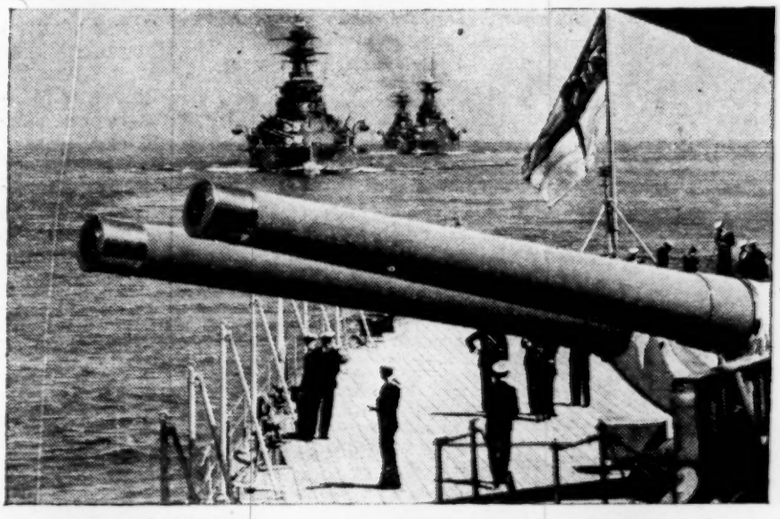

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LAST YEAR'S BOOKS

ALTHOUGH a year of deepening crisis ending in a major war, 1939 must be accounted a good publishing season. Any normal year might be so considered from which one could make the following list of selected books:

SCHOLARSHIP: *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke* (Oliver and Boyd, 30s.); *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, edited by Professor Garrod (Oxford Press, 30s.); *Imitations of Horace*, by Alexander Pope, edited by John Butts (Methuen, 15s.); and a newly discovered poem by Christopher Smart, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, edited by W. Force Stead (Cape, 15s.).

LITERATURE: James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (Faber, 25s.); and poems by Stephen Spender (*The Still Centre*, Faber, 6s.); Louis MacNeice (*Autumnal Journal*, Faber, 6s.); Dylan Thomas (*The Map of Love*, Dent, 7s. 6d.); and W. J. Turner (*Selected Poems*, Oxford, 7s. 6d.).

BIOGRAPHY: *Caroline of England*, by Peter Quennell (Collins, 12s. 6d.); *The Young Melbourne*, by David Cecil (Constable, 10s.); *The Prince Imperial*, by K. John (Putnam, 10s. 6d.); *Matthew Arnold*, by Lionel Trilling (Allen and Unwin, 15s.); *An Autobiography*, by R. G. Collingwood (Oxford Press, 7s. 6d.).

SCIENCE: *The Social Function of Science*, by J. D. Bernal (Routledge, 12s. 6d.); *Dangerous Thoughts*, by Lancelot Hogben (Allen and Unwin, 8s. 6d.).

NOVELS: *A Family and a Fortune*, by I. Compton Burnett (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.); *Goodbye to Berlin*, by Christopher Isherwood (Hogarth, 7s. 6d.).

ART: *Last Lectures*, by Roger Fry (Cambridge Press, 21s.); *Leonardo da Vinci*, by Sir Kenneth Clark (Cambridge, 21s.).

POLITICS: *The Revolution of Destruction*, by Hermann Rauschning (Heinemann, 10s. 6d.); *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919–1939*, by E. H. Carr (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.); *Undeclared War*, by Elizabeth Wiskemann (Constable, 12s.); *The School for Dictators*, by Ignazio Silone (Cape, 8s. 6d.); *Fallen Bastions*, by G. E. R. Gedye (Gollancz, 16s.); *The Rise of Italian Fascism*, by A. Rossi (Methuen, 15s.); *The Fate of Homo Sapiens*, by H. G. Wells (Secker and Warburg, 7s. 6d.).

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And their follicles out-torn.

"Beware the Scrapershave my son,
The blades that bite, the hairs that catch
Beware the Bristlechin and shun
The stubbling Razorsnatch."

He took his sharp bright blade in hand
And water hot—an ample stream
To tame his beard he commandeered
Parke-Davis Shaving Cream.

And as with deftish stroke he swept
The whiskers from his physiog
The Scrapershave the ghost upgave
And died as dead as dog.

One two! One two! and through and through
The silky blade went snicker-snack!
He felt his chin and with a grin
He went clean-shaven back.

"Oh, thou hast slain the Scrapershave,
The credit's thine, P.D.S.C.!
Oh beardless day, Callooh, Callay!"
He chortled in his glee.

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BOOKS TO COME

A first-hand study of Italy's mass colonisation of Libya, *Fourth Shore*, comes from Routledge on January 22nd. The author, Martin Moore, who is on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, went out to Libya with a party of 4,000 colonists and investigated conditions for himself.

On the same day Routledge will publish the third volume of Sven Hedin's Chinese travel trilogy, *The Wandering Lake*. It deals with his expedition to Lake Lop-nor (called the Wandering Lake because of its propensity to shift itself bodily from one place to another) down the Konche- and Kum-daria rivers.

A Hundred Years of Economic Development (in the *Hundred Years* series), by G. P. Jones, Lecturer in Economic History, and A. G. Pool, Lecturer in Economics of Sheffield University, comes from Duckworth on January 25th. This firm will also publish on that day *Danny*, a new novel by Walter Brierley, author of *Means Test Man*.

The new book by Daniele Varé, author of *Laughing Diplomat*, due from John Murray on January 23rd, is a play, *Princess in Tartary*, a comedy written round the Emperor of China, Marco Polo, the Great Khan of Tartary, the Empress, the Princess and Loreto the Parrot. Mr. Murray publishes on the same day *Christianity Applied to the Life of Men and Nations*, a reprint of an Essex Hall lecture delivered by Bishop Gore in 1920.

Macmillans announce for January 23rd *Unfinished Victory*, by Arthur Bryant, a history of the events leading up to the war and a study of the growth of the Nazi spirit.

Portrait of a Young Man, by Franklin Lushington, due from Faber on January 18th, is in some sort a prelude to the author's earlier book, *Pigeon Hoo*. It is an autobiography dealing with the golden age of country life which came to an end in 1914 and with the writer's first experiences as a young artillery officer.

Faber announce for the same date a first novel, *Now, Gentlemen Please*, by Herbert Fernée. Somewhat in the New Yorker vein, it is compared by its publishers with *The Diary of a Nobody* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

Mr. Harper Cory, author of *Wild Animals at Home*, coming from Nelson on January 25th, describes those qualities of the human race which are exploited by the animal world with peculiar success and other more mysterious animal faculties which baffle all human explanations.

Life in the Bush, by F. J. Meyrick, coming from this firm on the same date, is an account of the home life and colonial adventures of a young man, Henry Howard Meyrick, who in 1840 became a pastoral settler in the neighbourhood of Port Phillip, Victoria, at a time when the pioneer squatters were suffering terrible hardships and dangers. This biography is by its hero's uncle, Vicar and Rural Dean of Hove, who has drawn upon family letters and papers for his material.

There are three new additions to the Nelson classics (price 1*s.* 6*d.*)—Butler's *Erewhon*, Richard Jefferies' *Amaryllis at the Fair*, with an introduction by Edward Garnett, and *The Muse of Quiet*, an anthology of restful verse compiled by Dr. Richard Wilson.

Imperial Twilight, coming from Harrap on January 18th, is the third volume of Mrs. Bertita Harding's Hapsburg trilogy.

MARIE SCOTT-JAMES

Week-end Competitions

No. 518

Set by D. Tearsheet

Competitors are asked to provide a set of six known quotations appropriate to the fly-leaves of any of the books listed elsewhere in this issue under Last Year's Books.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Jan. 19th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 516

Set by Roger Marvell

Foreign travel having become an unobtainable pleasure, competitors are invited to write poems of not more than 16 lines, describing a place that they have visited or would like to visit. A first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea are offered for the best entries.

Competitors, I flatter myself, enjoyed this excuse for remembering happier things: there was a large entry, and there were good lines about a vast variety of places from Bordeaux to San Francisco, from Algeria to Cathay. Allan M. Laing produced a brilliant parody of *Jerusalem the Golden*:

O Hollywood the golden, with balmy breezes blest,
Where beauty humps the sidewalk in next-to-nothing dressed,
Where hash is slung by Hebes, and soda-jerkers are
Both fired with the ambition to be a movie-star!

M. Snow, R. S. Jaffray and Adam Wick also did well in the comic style. After a great deal of re-reading the "likely" entries were reduced to seven. Then, regretfully, M.R.D., N. Lewis, Nancy Gunter and H.G.M. were eliminated. Three remain, and I recommend that the First Prize be divided between M. J. P. Walters and Katharine Busvine, and that the Second go to Constance Sewell.

FIRST PRIZE (1)

SHAMEEN. MAY 1939

We gave the bar the River Pearl had made
to strangers for a dwelling. There they came,
and built in time a foreign land. They said
"these shades, these patterned paths our ours, the name
of Dives writ upon the gate. Who pass
along our shores may smell these fragrant flowers,
and see the children playing on the grass.
Shameen denies celestial visitors."
We laughed. Around them rolled vast city life
pale yellow and cobalt. River and road,
oxcart, junk, rickshaw, laden man and wife
all laughed. The white man's burden parodied.
The Small Ones came. The bridge to peace inside
stood closed, grey walls turned grim, men shook their head.
We turned at bay, we burnt our town, we died.
Their trees still flower, but all around have fled.

M. J. P. WALTERS

FIRST PRIZE (2)

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

In Norfolk, in the spring, everybody has a touch of malaria.
Japonica, forsythia, camellias, airy azaleas astound the season.
Old Mrs. Calvert, family-proud lady, her petticoat showing, prods in her garden.
At evening the voices of negroes, shuffling home from the docks, linger softly behind them on the spring air.
Norfolk is ugly: flat Tidewater countr"; city twice burned—by British, by Yankees.
Lord Dunmore, fleeing up the Chesapeake, fired a cannonball which lodged in St. Paul's.
Cannonball, you are reverently tended by Daughters of the American Revolution.
Waterfront, razed by the Federals . . . Waterfront, you are revenged.
People named Grant are not recognised socially.
Norfolk lies bedded in bays, rivers, marshes . . . swamps where the cypresses, bleached white and twisted,
Hang suspended in water. Which is reflection . . . the trees or the roots?
Why don't you stir yourselves, people of Norfolk? Why not resist the new Yankee invasion? *Why not make money?*
You drink too many cokes in too many drugstores . . . too much corn whisky. . . .
People too lazy, too haughty, too humorous . . . too full of japonica,
Forsythia, azaleas, camellias, malaria. . . .

KATHARINE BUSVINE

SECOND PRIZE

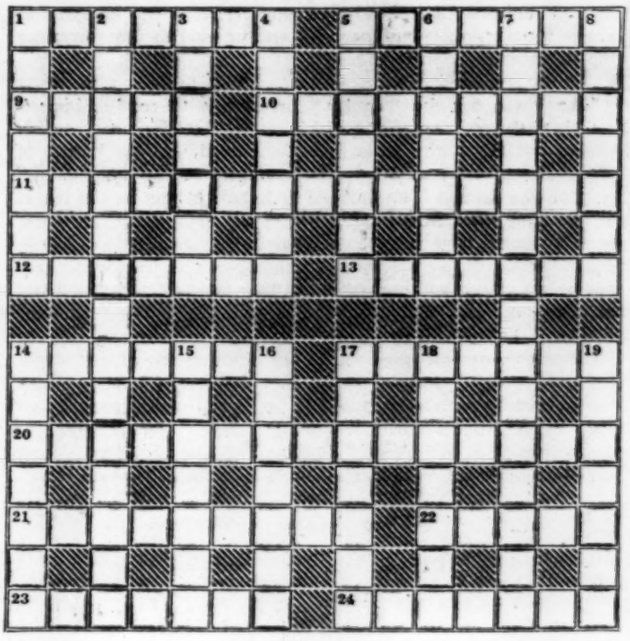
BAVARIA

Here let us stay and look down on the *Blick*,
I in my *Dirndl*, you in leather shorts.
You do not fear that cream upon your *Magen?*
The map! I'll name those distant mountain *Orts*.
To-morrow we will be again in München—
Where gives, they say, an *Austellung* by Brague. . . .
Moselle and *Junger Hahn* for luncheon
And evenings drinking brandy in the Park.
Streets lovelier than dreams from travel folders
Or those from Tauber's threadworn song of Wien,
Rococo in the Maximilianstrasse,
The Residenz, the churches and the green.
Here let us stay, for now I have remembered
Museum feet, the mind's engorged blank—
White three-linked trams outside the Bahnhof ringing,
And English spoken loudly in the bank.

CONSTANCE SEWELL

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 514

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is

Miss E. M. Thomas, 163 Gloucester Terrace, Hyde Park, W.2

ACROSS

1. Vehicle in which the trader drives to Billingsgate? (7)
5. How the ratings decked up the ship as it were. (7)
9. Fiddle maker whose name suggests that he was often trodden under foot. (5)
10. Site of a projected cabin. (9)
11. Where rectors keep their cartridges? (15)
12. If Irene were to centre it. (7)
13. War Savings, in these days, no doubt. (7)
14. Have a flip, Amy, just to be different. (7)
17. One seizes such opportunities at one's risk of course. (7)
20. Religious Reveille. (15)
21. Would it give one a musical ride? (9)
22 (rev.). Made a famous farewell. (5)
23 (rev.). Sorted sorters. (7)
24. Remains in confusion. (7)

DOWN

1. Stage before the débutante. (7)
2. A quarrelsome spouse perhaps. (15)
3 (rev.). Destined no doubt for the Siegfried Line. (7)
4. Light when faint. (7)
5 (rev.). Many animals are so parked. (7)
6. Judges go to them by circuitous routes. (7)
7. The biggest story teller. (15)
8. Arrays the salad. (7)
14. Extremely accurate in lighthouses. (7)
15. Schismatic creatures. (7)
16 (rev.). Cite Fry for this. (7)
17. Horse paces of the incapable. (7)
18. A natural, not a legal, reversion. (7)
19. Provided by Lee. (7)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

■	O	F	F	E	R	S	■	D	E	P	I	C	T	■
■	■	I	■	K	■	P	■	E	■	O	■	H	■	■
D	I	S	S	A	T	I	S	F	A	C	T	I	O	N
E	■	H	■	R	■	N	■	E	■	■	■	N	■	I
R	E	I	■	D	I	N	A	N	■	S	T	E	R	N
B	■	N	■	■	E	■	D	■	H	■	S	■	E	■
Y	O	G	H	O	U	R	T	■	D	I	R	E	C	T
W	■	V	■	P	■	S	■	R	■	R	■	L	■	Y
I	R	I	S	E	S	■	R	E	S	T	R	A	I	N
N	■	L	■	N	■	L	■	D	■	■	■	N	■	I
N	I	L	E	S	■	I	N	S	E	T	■	T	I	N
E	■	A	■	■	N	■	T	■	I	■	E	■	T	■
R	E	G	I	M	E	N	T	A	L	M	A	R	C	H
■	■	E	■	A	■	E	■	R	■	O	■	N	■	■
■	E	S	P	R	I	T	■	T	H	R	U	S	H	■

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